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ABSTRACT

The introductory essay in this volume examines the relationship between philosophy and common sense as these pertain to educational administration, and suggests that philosophy should become a form of critical self-reflective decision-making that occurs within the domain of social action and does not stop with the achievement of clarity of understanding. Because social action is structured and constrained by the logic and beliefs of common sense, a critique of common sense, grounded in a Marxist dialectic of theory and practice, can liberate social action from unchallenged ways of perceiving and interpreting the world. Thus the proper task of philosophy in the context of administrative action is both critical and emancipatory. Following this essay are four readings by different authors: (1)"Philosophers of Education: Detached Spectators or Political Practitioners?," by K. Harris; (2) "Power, Tradition, and Change: Educational Implications of the Thought of Antonio Gramsci," by G. Mardle; (3) "Piaget, Marx, and the Political Ideology of Schooling," by B. A. Kaufman; and (4) "Making Student 'Types': The Links between Professional and Commonsense Knowledge Systems and Educational Practice," by D. L. Carlson. An annotated bibliography is included. (TE)

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ESA 841 THEORY AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Philosophy, Common Sense, and Action in Educational Administration

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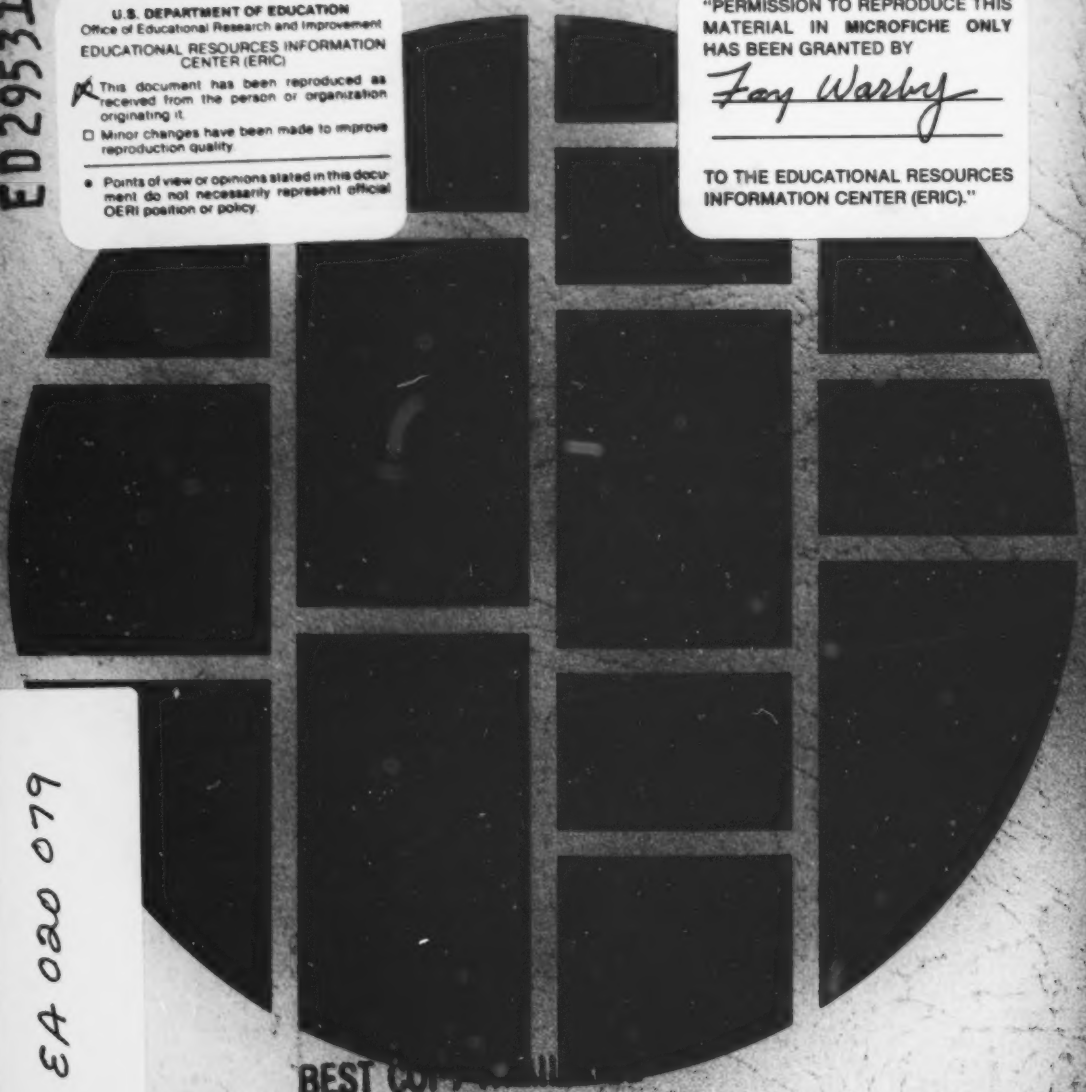

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Philosophy, common sense, and action in educational administration

John Codd

Massey University

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Course team
Richard Bates (chairman)
Diana Macmillan (course developer)

Consultants
William Boyd
John Codd
William Foster
Henry Giroux
Peter Gronn
Laurence Iannaccone
Edward Kynaston
Thomas Popkewitz
Paula Silver
Peter Watkins

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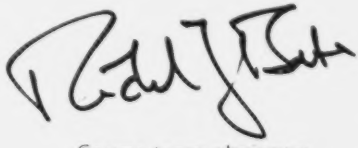
Series introduction

It is now widely recognised, among theorists and practitioners alike, that the traditions that have informed educational administration as a field of study for several decades are of only limited use in coming to terms with the complexity and value-laden nature of educational practice. The sudden politisation of the context and conduct of education has raised issues of immediate import that cannot be dealt with adequately by functionalist analysis of behavioural science. The collapse of these theoretical traditions in educational administration has produced a vacuum into which a very haphazard collection of intellectual bric-a-brac has been sucked. As a result, both theorists and the practitioners who look to them for help in an increasingly disordered world are alike in their bewilderment. How can alternative formulations be developed? How can reliable and relevant analysis be made?

The series of books of which this volume is a part is an attempt to explore a variety of intellectual traditions that have, until now, been largely ignored or dismissed by educational administrators. Each of the books is an attempt to bring a particular intellectual perspective to bear on the practical problems of administering education. They are, therefore, diverse in their starting points and in their analysis. What they have in common, however, is a rejection of a purely technical, functionalist approach to educational administration, and a commitment to a critical and reflexive consideration of educational practice.

The ideas presented in the introductory essays are necessarily an encapsulation of arguments which have developed and are developing more fully elsewhere. In order to assist readers to participate in these developments, selected readings are attached to each paper, and an annotated bibliography of key works is provided. We hope that the publication of this series will encourage others to join a necessary exploration of alternative perspectives in educational administration. Such exploration is long overdue.



Course team chairman

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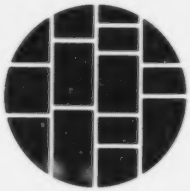

Introduction

This essay examines the relationship between philosophy and common sense, particularly as these pertain to educational administration. It will be argued that philosophy should be construed as a form of human activity that has important social and political consequences: one that goes beyond rational reflection and beyond the systematic clarification or analysis of fundamental ideas. It will be argued that philosophy should become a form of critical self-reflective decision making that occurs within the domain of social action itself and does not come to rest with the achievement of clarity of understanding. Moreover, because social action is structured and constrained by the logic and beliefs of common sense, it is through the critique of common sense, grounded in a dialectic of theory and practice, that social action can become liberated from unchallenged ways of perceiving and interpreting the world.

Thus the proper task of philosophy, within the context of administrative action, is both critical and emancipatory, culminating not with enlightened consciousness but with social action that has been liberated from an internal source of oppression that is generally so much taken-for-granted as to be not even perceived as a constraint upon human agency.

This task is not achieved through detached reflection, but develops dialectically through the critique and intellectual ordering of practical activity. It is not the preserve and accomplishment of a select and specialised group who happen to have refined and systematised the discipline of conceptual analysis, but it is a socio-political activity, in which thought and action are reciprocally determined — an autonomous and creative activity immediately accessible to every individual at moments of ideological penetration and liberated self-understanding. Indeed it is in this sense that philosophy can be united with empirical theory to become an important instance of a radically new kind of theory to which the Frankfurt School philosophers have given the general name of 'critical theory'. It is in realising this particular form of ideological critique, moreover, that every practitioner is a potential philosopher, and that philosophy can provide the basis for emancipatory political practice. The discussion that follows will attempt to go some of the way towards elaborating a defence of this position.

Analytical philosophy and common sense

The view of philosophy that has most strongly influenced the philosophy of education in recent years has been that of the analytical school. For many philosophers raised in the analytical school, common sense is the raw material upon which philosophical reasoning 'does its work'. In this view, common sense and philosophy are worlds apart. For instance, Richard Pring (1976, p. 86) defines common sense as 'that range of beliefs which people share and hold in an unquestioning sort of way, and which provide a basic view of the world, of their position within the world, and of how they ought to act'. When these beliefs are called into question, the task of philosophy gets under way. Its goal is not to replace such common-sense beliefs with others that may be closer to the truth, but rather to produce what Russell

called the experience of 'liberating doubt'. In this, analytical, view the philosophical task is confined to addressing the Socratic questions 'What do you mean?' and 'How do you know?'.

Analytical philosophy casts philosophers into a spectatorial role (Harris 1980) so that philosophical thought takes on a 'second-order' character in which 'first-order' ideas are examined against criteria of clarity, and 'first-order' arguments are examined against criteria of validity. Not being experts in moral sensitivity, practical wisdom, or political judgement, analytical philosophers can only try to clarify our ways of thinking *about* domains of human activity such as education, illuminating the concepts we employ, the inferences we make, and the choices we express. They can only render explicit, for example, the criteria of judgement we already use in reaching educational decisions. They can only analyse the major positions taken on issues of educational policy by questioning their premises, consequences, and alternatives (O'Connor 1957; Scheffler 1958; Hirst 1963; Peters 1965, 1966).

According to Russell (1912):

> The value of philosophy is, in fact, to be sought largely in its very uncertainty. The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the co-operation or consent of his deliberate reason . . . Philosophy, though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts which it raises, is able to suggest many possibilities which enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom (Russell 1912, pp. 242–3).

Thus, in this view, philosophy either shakes us out of the complacency of common sense and into a more sceptical, and presumably more desirable, frame of mind, or it enables us to exercise our 'deliberate reason' so as to purge us of prejudices or release us from the bondage of muddled thinking.

From the analytic point of view, 'common sense' is implicitly equated with 'muddled thinking' and the 'tyranny of custom', a confusion which it is the task of philosophy to correct. From another *liberal* point of view, however, common-sense knowledge may be defended against such philosophical criticism on the grounds that it is closer to the domain of action and experience than are specialised forms of knowledge. L. R. Perry, for instance, writing about the importance of common-sense thought, knowledge, and judgement for education, argues that common sense provides the essential awareness of what kinds of specialised knowledge it is necessary to apply to particular problems or situations. Common-sense thinking, according to Perry,

> may legitimately object to being superseded when specialized thinking makes an unjustified claim to deal more effectively with a subject: unjustified, because specialized verdicts have to be modified, as a rule, to be useful in the general field of experience, and it is the task of commonsense to do this, and to judge what weight to assign to the various kinds of relevant specialized knowledge. Because commonsense thought is concerned with experience lying outside the

> specialized area, it is justified not only in modifying but even on occasion overruling expert knowledge. Thus the politician overrules the general, the businessman the architect, or the teacher the psychologist (Perry 1965, p. 128).

Such a view seems to overlook completely the possibility that common-sense appraisals of a situation may be distorted by contextual and situational factors, rendering them less justifiable than the specialised judgements that pertain to the same situation. Which appraisal wins out may depend ultimately on who has the power to act or who controls the situation rather than on which appraisal is more valid. When the politician overrules the general it is a social political action that is being made, not a logical deduction.

This example points to the fundamental epistemological assumption behind each of these constructions of the relationship between philosophy and common sense. They all rest upon a dualistic separation of thought and action, or theory and practice. Whether we take Russell's suggestion that the function of philosophy is to 'enlarge our thoughts', or Pring's point that common sense provides a framework of unquestioned beliefs, or Perry's argument that common sense is the final court of appeal in arriving at justifiable judgements, we have the basic assumption underlying all these positions that philosophy and common sense are distinct, though related, ways of *thinking* rather than *acting*. It is assumed that problems of philosophy must be distinguished from problems of practice such that — although any particular action we make upon the world may arise either from common sense or from philosophical thought, or from elements of both — it is not the action itself that makes the difference, it is the way we think about it.

What we have then, as a result of such arguments, is a gap between theory and practice. For both the analytical philosopher and the liberal theorist, the ideal pursuit of theory is essentially removed from practical and public affairs, and the role of the philosopher is staunchly to maintain an uncommitted view towards different and competing ways of life. Thus, in the words of Richard Bernstein:

> Thinkers who are at variance on almost every other issue take the defense of this ideal as virtually synonymous with a defense of free, self-corrective, open inquiry which is subject only to the critical norms of intersubjective discourse (Bernstein 1976, p. 173).

Indeed, from the time of Plato and Aristotle, the gap between theory and practice has had a powerful effect on the nature of social and political life, influencing not only the structure of social knowledge itself, but also determining the social transformation that could be considered possible.

This ideal image of the detached theorist has become the hallmark of both analytical and liberal philosophy, implying as it does that theoretical knowledge is independent of its practical application and that factual accounts of the social world can, and should, be independent of the particular interests and values of those who construct them. That these distinctions have been vigorously debated, even among analytical and liberal philosophers, has not diminished the persuasiveness and potency of the image. However, this very image is now under attack from another source,

from one that takes the critical relationship between theory and practice as its essential and initial point of departure. According to Bernstein:

> It is an orientation that has its roots in Hegel, and in Marx's use and understanding of *critique*; that has been given a classical formulation by the central figures of the Frankfurt School; and that has been refined and developed by Jürgen Habermas . . . There is growing recognition of the need for the type of critique that has a practical interest in the fate and quality of social and political life. The search for empirical correlations, the task of interpreting social and political reality, and the critique of this 'reality,' are not three distinct types of inquiry. They are three internal moments of theorizing about social and political life (Bernstein 1976, p. 174).

Within such a tradition of critical theorising about social and political life, the relationship between philosophy and common sense can be reconstructed. Indeed, this very task was first undertaken by Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, in his *Prison Notebooks* (Gramsci 1971).

Gramsci on philosophy and common sense

To appreciate the significance of Gramsci's critique of common sense, it is necessary to examine several other elements in his unique contribution to Marxist social theory and political strategy. Recognising the limitations within the traditional Marxist theory of the State, Gramsci set out to explain how culture and ideology become productive forces within advanced capitalist societies (Mouffe 1979).

The traditional view had emphasised the material mode of production and the economic base as the main buttresses that kept the State in place, protected by physical coercion (or the threat of it) and other direct forms of social control carried through the State apparatuses. But this mechanistic explanation could not account for the failure of the working class to develop revolutionary consciousness, even with changes to the economic base.

Gramsci concluded that there must be forces deep within the popular psyche that induced the oppressed to accept or 'consent' to their own exploitation and daily misery. He advanced the concept of *ideological hegemony* to explain how the ruling class maintains its dominance by achieving a popular consensus mediated through the various institutions of civil society, including the schools, the mass media, the law, religion, and popular culture. This form of ideological domination evades resistance by permeating consciousness itself, becoming embedded in popular beliefs, values, folklore, and common sense (Femia 1981). Carl Boggs elaborates the concept in the following way:

> By hegemony Gramsci meant the permeation throughout civil society — including a whole range of structures and activities like trade unions, schools, the churches, and family — of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, morality, etc. that is in one way or another supportive of the established order and the class interests that dominate it. Hegemony in this sense might be defined as an 'organizing principle', or world-view (or combination of such world-views), that

> is diffused by agencies of ideological control and socialization into every area of daily life. To the extent that this prevailing consciousness is internalized by the broad masses, it becomes part of 'common sense'; as all ruling elites seek to perpetuate their power, wealth, and status, they necessarily attempt to popularize their own philosophy, culture, morality, etc. and render them unchallengeable, part of the natural order of things (Boggs 1976, p. 39).

As it is defined within the context of Gramsci's political theory, hegemony refers to a form of domination that works through intellectual and moral suasion (Femia 1981). When it is applied to the school, this concept relates not only to the formal curriculum and its knowledge content, but also to the way that content is structured, organised, and valued within the daily life of the school. Ideological hegemony therefore is to be found in the everyday common-sense practices that enable schools as institutions of learning and teaching to continue to operate (Apple 1982). Cases of how this functions are not difficult to find. Many working-class parents, for example, subscribe to the common-sense view that schools provide equal opportunities for all to succeed on the basis of merit. They believe that examinations and other forms of pupil assessment are objective and impartial devices for the distribution of educational rewards and that these rewards are allocated to individuals on the basis of ability and effort. In this way, the rhetoric of equality of educational opportunity coheres with common-sense knowledge about schooling.

Thus common-sense knowledge structures mass consciousness in ways that mask and mystify the existing power relations and social arrangements. When, for instance, a factory is closed following a boardroom decision involving a complex set of economic and industrial factors appraised in terms of capital interests only, the workers can be blamed for their own fate by an appeal to the common-sense belief that strikes cause lack of productivity, and when productivity falls below a minimal level, factories must close. That such reasoning appeals to common sense, thereby gaining wide popular assent, tends to draw attention away from two of its most common features. The first is that such reasoning is always completely dislocated from its historical context, and the second is that it is generally articulated by members of the dominant class by incorporating common elements drawn from the world views and interests of subordinate groups. Thus, the rhetoric will include references to 'the national interest', 'the hardships of unemployment', or 'the tyranny of compulsory unionism'. The hegemony succeeds to the extent that it defines the meaning and limits of such pronouncements. By positing certain ideas and rules, such as 'democratic elections', 'individual freedoms', and 'the welfare of workers', as natural and universal, hegemony has the effect of distorting both the form and content of discourse amongst those groups in society whose actions may then be interpreted as conflicting with those ideas and rules.

Although common sense, in Gramci's view, lacks intellectual order and coherence, it is nevertheless a product of history and a part of the historical process. Its origins lie within a coherent and comprehensive world view, a philosophy that has been widely shared in the past. It therefore contains within it a residue of intuitions about life and the world that Gramsci calls 'good sense'. The task of philosophy is to articulate and render this 'good

sense' into a coherent and systematic world-view, free of hegemonic ideological distortion. Grasmsci notes that:

> Philosophy cannot be separated from the history of philosophy, nor can culture from the history of culture. In the most immediate and relevant sense, one cannot be a philosopher, by which I mean have a critical and coherent conception of the world, without having a consciousness of its historicity, of the phase of development which it represents and of the fact that it contradicts other conceptions or elements of other conceptions. One's conception of the world is a response to certain specific problems posed by reality, which are quite specific and 'original' in their immediate relevance (Gramsci 1971, p. 324).

In this view, philosophy is both critical and logically coherent, grounded in everyday experience while at the same time articulated through strategic political action. Only in this way can philosophy have cultural significance. The cultural contribution of philosophy is not to be found in the discovery of truths, but in 'the diffusion in a critical form of truths already discovered' (Gramsci 1971, p. 325). Gramsci asserts that:

> For a mass of people to be led to think coherently and in the same coherent fashion about the real present world, is a 'philosophical' event far more important and 'original' than the discovery by some philosophical 'genius' of a truth which remains the property of small groups of intellectuals (Gramsci 1971, p. 325).

When this is achieved, and clearly it is an educational achievement, philosophy supercedes religion and common sense — indeed it coincides with 'good sense' as opposed to 'common sense'. Philosophy should not be removed from everyday life to occupy some remote or esoteric realm of abstract ideas; it should be an essential dimension of everyday human experience; it should be the criticism and superarching of common sense. For Gramsci, the majority of humans are already philosophers insofar as they engage in practical activity, for in their practical activity 'there is implicitly contained a conception of the world, a philosophy' (Gramsci 1971, p. 344).

The dialectic of philosophy is that it is simultaneously active and reflective. On one hand, philosophy cannot be divorced from politics, because the choice and the criticism of a conception of the world is always a political matter. But, on the other hand, philosophy is also

> the invitation to people to reflect and to realise fully that whatever happens is basically rational and must be confronted as such, and that one should apply one's power of rational concentration and not let oneself be carried away by instinctive and violent impulses (Gramsci 1971, p. 328).

Gramsci does not suggest a specious unity of theory and practice, but regards them as interdependent and dialectically related. To collapse theory into practice would be to ignore the creative and critical functions of theory; to make practice into something theoretic would be to diminish its social and historical dimensions. Gramsci's project is to establish that philosophy is both theoretical and practical.

> that philosophy is a conception of the world and that philosophical activity is not to be conceived solely as the 'individual' elaboration of systemically coherent concepts, but also and above all as a cultural battle to transform the popular 'mentality' and to diffuse the philosophical innovations which will demonstrate themselves to be 'historically true' to the extent that they become coherently — i.e. historically and socially — universal (Gramsci 1971, p. 348).

Enlightened and counter-hegemonic practice is the primary accomplishment of philosophical activity conceived of in this way. It renders the critique of practice a philosophical task no less significant than the analysis of theory. In the discussion that follows, it will be argued that, by pursuing this goal of ideological critique, philosophy can provide the necessary impulse for emancipatory social action.

Piaget and the transformation of consciousness

At this point, some useful connections can be made with a developmental theory of cognitive structure, for Piaget advances a constructivist account of consciousness in which the developing individual and the environment comprise a dynamic system in which cognitive development is both governed and constituted by the progressive interaction of agency and structure. His notion of constructive transformation has much in common with what Giddens (1979) calls the duality of structure within the social domain.

Giddens (1979, p. 69) refers to 'the *duality of structure*, which relates to the *fundamentally recursive character of social life, and expresses the mutual dependence of structure and agency*'. He argues that:

> Structure is both enabling and constraining . . . the same structural characteristics participate in the subject (the actor) as in the object (society). Structure forms 'personality' and 'society' simultaneously — but in neither case exhaustively: because of the significance of unintended consequences of action, and because of unacknowledged conditions of action . . . every process of action is a production of something new, a fresh act; but at the same time all action exists in continuity with the past, which supplies the means of its initiation. *Structure thus is not to be conceptualised as a barrier to action, but as essentially involved in its production*: even in the most radical processes of social change which, like any others, occur in time (Giddens 1979, pp. 69–70).

In a fundamental sense, Piaget holds that consciousness always involves a form of implicit activity upon the world and that the very process of thinking would not occur in the absence of a developmental history in which the individual has performed physical actions upon the environment. Piaget regards intelligence as the disposition (or capacity) to *act* in certain ways. Mental operations, therefore, are simply internalised or transformed actions and sequences of action, such that sensori-motor activity provides the necessary conditions for the later stage of formal operations. Hence, the physical actions of joining, reversing, and co-ordinating objects become transformed into mental operations that are performed either

upon linguistic/logical symbols, or 'formal propositions'.

A cognitive structure then, is not a mental referent, but a descriptive category for a certain class of actions. It is not the content (either whole or in part) that constitutes the structure, but rather the relations among the action elements: for example, how they are combined and integrated into perceptions, judgements, interpretations, and problem-solving strategies. To define the cognitive structure is to define the categorical limits under which these actions can be described and hence to define their formal composition at a point in time (synchronic structure) or the transformations that occur through time (diachronic structure). Thus for Piaget, the mind is not construed as a *tabula rasa* upon which the data of experience are written, nor as an 'empty room' that is gradually furnished with images, memories, and concepts, but as the domain of activity, a repertoire of potential actions, constrained and oriented by its developing structure.

On the one hand, Piaget (1971, p. 9) rejects the empiricist theory that holds that there is genesis of knowledge without structure. Such a theory, represented by Aristotle in classical philosophy, emphasises contiguity (or association), repetition, and memory — for example, Skinner's theory that language learning can be entirely accounted for through the building up of associations between items in experience (Skinner 1957). On the other hand, Piaget also rejects the notion of structure without genesis that can be found in theories such as Chomsky's, which posits the formation of innate ideas (Chomsky 1968). For Piaget, the way out of the dilemma lies with the dialectical notion of *construction*. Avoiding the pitfalls of dualism and subjectivity, he emphasises the point that, in his view, objectivity comes through activity, by means of progressive movement in the interactions between the individual and the environment. He expresses this as follows:

> The achievement of knowledge is thus to be explained in terms of a theory indissolubly linking structuralism with constructivism, every structure being the resultant of a genesis and every genesis being the transition from a more to a less elementary (or more complex) structure. So that eventually logico-mathematical operations are linked to the general co-ordinations of action (unions, order, correspondences, etc.), and in the last analysis to biological self-regulatory systems; but without the latter containing in advance all those constructions for which they merely constitute the starting point (Piaget 1972, pp. 12–13).

Intellectual activity begins with environmental demands, and development involves the progressively more complex *equilibration* of the two processes of assimilation and accommodation. In effect, this is a process whereby equilibrium is maintained in the various structural wholes (sensori-motor, perceptual, concrete operational) throughout all the exchanges that occur between growing subjects and their environment. This equilibrium is not an extrinsic or added characteristic, but rather an intrinsic and constitutive property of organic and mental life (Piaget 1968). Equilibration is a regulatory factor that unifies development.

Responses to environmental demands represent either assimilation or accommodation, and physical actions gradually become internalised to

form a mental structure (i.e. a repertoire of mental activities operating according to definite rules). The structure means that there will be limits to the content of consciousness, but Piaget insists that transformations arise out of the relationship between the individual and the environment, especially when the individual acts upon the environment (both physical and social). He recognises the importance of social influences and makes the point that:

> The human being is immersed right from birth in a social environment which affects him just as much as his physical environment. Society, even more, in a sense, than the physical environment, changes the very structure of the individual, because it not only compels him to recognize facts, but also provides him with a ready-made system of signs, which modify his thought; it presents him with new values and it imposes on him an infinite series of obligations (Piaget 1950, p. 156).

What is distinctive about Piaget's theory of cognitive structures, however, is that it entails a convergence between the epistemological and the biological. Hence, Hamlyn (1978) and others have argued that while Piaget's epistemology places emphasis on experience as the source of objectivity in perception and cognition, he fails to establish a criterion for connecting objectivity with intersubjective agreement.

Educationally, it is important to distinguish between one, the structures of cognitive development, which enable us to explain why individuals can or cannot act upon the world, or experience the world, in certain ways — what their capacities or limitations are at certain stages of development — and two, the concepts, principles, and structures that comprise a domain of shared and public knowledge and which also place limits upon how the individual can view or act upon the world. While the acquisition of knowledge comes about through the actions and experiences of the individual, which in turn must always take place within structural limits, it also involves 'the initiation into a body of knowledge that others either share or might in principle share' (Hamlyn 1978, p. 58). Thus, in addition to the individual structuring of cognitive development, there is also the social structuring of shared knowledge, whether it be of a specialised or common-sense kind. In either case, there may be epistemological barriers to improvements of practice.

If we study Gramsci's writings on the education of philosophers, we find not only startling similarities with Piaget's theory of active knowledge, but also a clear recognition of the socio-historical dimension in the development and transformation of that knowledge as it is constituted by the actions of individuals. Remembering Gramsci's argument that everyone is a philosopher (a claim that is also made by Piaget), we can recognise the educational significance of his statement that:

> The unity of science and life is precisely an active unity, in which alone liberty of thought can be realised; it is a master-pupil relationship, one between the philosopher and the cultural environment in which he has to work and from which he can draw the necessary problems for formulation and resolution. In other words, it is the relationship between philosophy and history (Gramsci 1971, pp. 350–1).

Thus for Gramsci, as for Piaget, the transformation of the structures of consciousness originates with the agency of individuals and occurs through similar processes of self-regulation and equilibration. In both cases, it is a reflective and dialectical educational process: for Piaget, it is the developmental structure of cognition that constrains action while at the same time being transformed through the dialectic of experience; whereas for Gramsci, it is the hegemonic structure of common sense that constrains action while at the same time being capable of transformation through the dialectic of philosophy and history.

The full educational implications of these complementary aspects of the theories of Gramsci and Piaget have yet to be worked out and certainly would need more extensive and detailed treatment than this introductory essay can offer. Enough has been said, however, to suggest that a constructivist epistemology, consistent with both theories, is a necessary precondition for the emergence of ideological critique.

Structure and agency in educational praxis

It follows from the foregoing discussion that forms of consciousness are constructed dialectically in ways that are neither fully determined by existing social formations, nor fully autonomous in terms of the actions of individual agents. In other words, consciousness is structured both developmentally through individual agency as Piaget has shown, and socially through cultural and ideological mediation. It is both structured and structuring (Giddens 1979). To the extent that social formations structure consciousness, there exists a level of ideological domination that constrains the pursuit of individual goals. On the other hand, the reasons that people give for their actions will sometimes reflect an authentic motivation or exercise of will that penetrates the existing socio-structural constraints. It is this transformative capacity of human action that gives to philosophy its political dimension.

It is in his emphasis on the necessarily social nature of consciousness that Gramsci's epistemology strongly resembles that which underlies the pedagogy of Paulo Freire (1970, 1976, 1978). Just as Freire contends that to know things is to know them in relation to other things (Matthews 1980), so Gramsci demonstrates the serious inadequacies of treating individuals as though they had independent, ahistorical, and 'decultured' minds. He argues that:

> One must conceive of man as a series of active relationships (a process) in which individuality, though perhaps the most important, is not, however, the only element to be taken into account. The humanity which is reflected in each individuality is composed of various elements: 1. the individual; 2. other men; 3. the natural world. But the latter two elements are not as simple as they might appear. The individual does not enter into relations with other men by juxtaposition, but organically, in as much, that is, as he belongs to organic entities which range from the simplest to the most complex. Thus Man does not enter into relations with the natural world just by being himself part of the natural world, but actively, by means of work and technique. Further: these relations are not mechanical.

> They are active and conscious. They correspond to the greater or lesser degree of understanding that each man has of them (Gramsci 1971, p. 352).

This theme is developed more fully in Freire's writings, which are concerned with forms of 'cultural action'. Freire argues that human beings constitute their own reality through cultural action, which may be directed towards liberation or oppression. Only the former, however, is humanity's true ontological and historical vocation, while the latter is a distortion of this vocation. Thus:

> Within history, in concrete, objective contexts, both humanization and dehumanization are possibilities for man as an uncompleted being conscious of his incompletion.
>
> But while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is man's vocation. This vocation is constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by that very negation. It is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity (Freire 1972, p. 28).

The distortion of humanity's ontological vocation is produced by a form of cultural action that constructs an oppressive reality, a cultural hegemony that absorbs those within it and functions to submerge their consciousness. This produces a domination that can be overcome only by cultural struggle, even revolution, in which education plays a crucial role.

Freire takes education to be a form of cultural action that also has the potential to be either oppressive or liberating. Oppressive education treats people as adaptable, manageable beings. It is antidialogical cultural action, which is characterised by the 'banking' concept because the teacher 'makes deposits' of knowledge, or information, and the scope of action allowed to the students 'extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits' (Freire 1970, p. 58). Oppressive education, in Freire's view, promotes the following attitudes and practices:

(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
(b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
(c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
(d) the teacher talks and the students listen — meekly;
(e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
(f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
(g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
(h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
(i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
(j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects (Freire 1970, p. 59).

In contrast, liberating education is problem posing and results in acts of cognition rather than transferrals of information. It is a form of cultural action that is dialogical and capable of transforming human consciousness from a condition of alienation to a condition of 'freedom'. Such freedom results from a process of *concientization*, which enables people to become fully human and to possess 'critical consciousness'. This can be achieved only by taking knowledge beyond the level of mere opinion or belief (*doxa*) to the level of *historical commitment*.

> It implies that men take the role of agents, makers and remakers of the world; it demands that men create their existence with the elements that life offers them. This is the reason why the more they are concientized the more they exist, not just live. Man, as a historical being, a maker of history, will be more a subject of the historical process the more he discovers himself as the object of it (Freire 1976, pp. 224–5).

But 'concientization' is more than just the realisation of oppression, it must also be '*a permanent critical approach to reality in order to discover it and discover the myths that deceive us and help to maintain the oppressing dehumanizing structures*' (Freire 1976, p. 225).

In similar vein to Gramsci, Freire argues that critical awareness is never sufficient in itself because it achieves only liberation of the mind. Such awareness must combine with action (praxis) to achieve real social change. In this notion of praxis moreover, both reflection and action are unified so that neither can be sacrificed without rendering true human dialogue impossible. Reflection without action is verbalism; action without reflection is activism (Freire 1972).

> Concientizing education — for liberation — instead of being an act of transferring knowledge is an act of knowing. It therefore implies, in its process, that educators and learners all become learners assuming the same attitude as cognitive subjects discovering knowledge through one another and through the objects they try to know. It is not a situation where one knows and others do not; it is rather the search, by all, at the same time to discover something by the act of knowing which cannot exhaust all the possibilities in the relation between object and subject. In other words, education for liberation tries to make history — not just receiving or reading history (Freire 1976, p. 225).

There are strong similarities here between Freire's notion of praxis embodied in dialogue and Gramsci's reconstruction of the relationship between philosophy and common-sense. Both provide a dialectical (or critical) dimension to the relationship between thought and action that allows us to view the educational theory–practice dichotomy in a new light. This view is made explicit by Freire in one of his letters to Guinea-Bissau, but the choice of words might just as well have been Gramsci's, when he writes that:

> The theory of knowledge that serves a revolutionary objective and is put into practice in education is based upon the claim that knowledge is always a process, and results from the conscious action (practice) of human beings on the objective reality which, in its turn,

> conditions them. Thus a dynamic and contradictory unity is established between objective reality and the persons acting on it. All reality is dynamic and contradictory in this same way.
>
> From the point of view of such a theory and of the education which grows from it, it is not possible:
>
> (a) to separate theory and practice;
>
> (b) to separate the act of knowing existing knowledge from the act of creating new knowledge;
>
> (c) to separate teaching from learning, educating from being educated.
>
> The method coherent with this theory of knowledge is itself as dynamic as the object to be known — objective reality (Freire 1978, p. 89).

In this view, education is not an internalised learning process, but a social practice 'in which the struggle for production, class conflict, and creative action are all dynamically interrelated' (Freire 1978, p. 90).

In their elaboration of the concept of education as a 'socio-practical field', de Castell and Freeman suggest that:

> . . . any educational theory will embody what are seen as the relevant constraints — material, political and social conditions and norms, including the moral demands of the society which it is designed to serve, including recognition of the criticisms of that society which are being developed within it in a search for a (hopefully) better one (de Castell and Freeman 1978, p. 20).

But while these constraints are manifested in the ideological hegemony of social relationships, it is important to recognise that they are located initially within the common-sense thought of individuals. Thus, at the individual level, common sense defines the limits of praxis by determining the form and content of thought and therefore the possibilities for action. To understand why this is so, it is important to recognise that hegemony, as it is discussed by Gramsci, is a structuralist concept. This point is made by Giroux when he states that:

> Hegemony is rooted in both the meanings and symbols that legitimate dominant interests as well as in the *practices* that structure daily experience. That hegemony functions, for example, through the significations embedded in school texts, films, and 'official' teacher discourse is clear enough. What is less obvious is that it also functions in those practical experiences that need no discourse, the message of which lingers beneath a structured silence (Giroux 1981, pp. 23–4).

For Gramsci, these hegemonic structures are necessary to the reproduction of social relations, but they can never be entirely deterministic in their effects, especially at the individual level. Hegemonic structures constrain action, but they also allow transformations to occur because the limits of structure are always capable of penetration by the spontaneous actions of individual agents. Thus, the contradictions between agency and structure become a powerful source of counter-hegemonic struggle. This struggle, as it is described by Gramsci, occurs at the very centre of the educational process and one of its critical impulses can be found in the dialectical relationship between philosophy and common sense. To understand the nature of this relationship, therefore, is to understand what

Gramsci means when he asserts that 'every relationship of "hegemony" is necessarily an educational relationship' (Gramsci 1971, p. 350). The educational significance lies not with the constraining effects of hegemonic structure upon human action, but, paradoxically, with the enabling transformational characteristics of those same structures.

Implications for educational administration

It is within the domain of educational administration that the counter-hegemonic struggle acquires some of its greatest potential for achieving transformations at the structural level. This can be illustrated most graphically through a critical examination of the practices within the organisational structures relating to the assessment and allocation of students (Carlson 1980).

In the first place, there should be a clear recognition of the significant number of administrative decisions that are based on some form of assessment and categorisation of students. What is less obvious, however, is that such decisions will very often contain inherent contradictions, producing hegemonic effects. These contradictions occur, in large part, because assessment is serving two distinct (and generally incompatible) ends. We might refer to these as the two faces, or two functions, of assessment: the *educational* function relating to teaching; and the *selective* (socialising) function relating to the division of labour (Bates 1981). While the proclaimed function of assessment is normally the educational one, the actual consequences of these practices are very often strongly social or even political. This reality, however, is masked by a number of ideological convictions.

Firstly, the conviction that competition is necessary and desirable is important to the legitimation of a 'free-market' economy. Indeed such a political economy could not survive without a common commitment to this belief. Thus examinations and tests are part of a tangible system of rewards and inducements by which students are thought to be motivated to compete. Secondly, the conviction that individual achievement is the result of ability combined with effort is fundamental to the meritocratic ideal that legitimates the allocation of individuals within a hierarchy of opportunities, status, and rewards. This commitment to selective allocation, moreover, follows from the common-sense belief that the social order should be preserved through a system that selects, categorises, and excludes on the basis of individual assessments (Hextall and Sarup 1977; Broadfoot 1979).

For most teachers and administrators, it is not the justification of assessment that is problematic, but the practical execution of the task. In professional common-sense terms the reasons for student assessment are fairly simple. Teachers need to be aware of what their students already know (so that they can build upon it). They also need to know whether their students are learning what they are attempting to teach (so that they can modify their teaching accordingly) (Bates 1981). Hence assessment has an important educational purpose in terms of improving the quality of learning. The contradictions arise because the structural effects of assessment practices are masked by a professional preoccupation with the tech-

nical appropriateness of many of the methods that are employed to achieve this purpose. In particular, there has been a proliferation of testing technology that tends to obscure rather than assist the relationship between teaching and learning. It is important to recognise, however, that this technologisation of educational assessment is but one aspect of a much wider ideological process directed towards the achievement of greater social control and certainty.

One of the most powerful ways in which scientific knowledge has been used to strengthen the oppressive structures of modern industrial societies is by enabling human beings, both individually and through social institutions, to gain greater control over a wider and wider range of events and situations. Indeed, it is in the pervasive application of scientific knowledge about nature that human beings have gained control over the physical environment and it is by attempting to translate scientific knowledge about society into social policy that some politicians strive to gain control over such elusive phenomena as unemployment, inflation, and various forms of social unrest. In both situations, it is appropriate to speak of *technical* applications of knowledge, although the results of the former have been more conclusive and less contentious than the results of the latter. As our society has become more and more *technological* (that is, more and more accustomed to regarding technical solutions as the only acceptable solutions to various human problems), it has become less tolerant of uncertainty and more obsessed with gaining control over every situation (Fay 1975). Needless to say, this seemingly inexorable process of technologisation has infused the institution of schooling as much as any other social institution and one of its obvious manifestations has been the political demand for accountability — that is, for forms of assessment that will ensure greater control over what happens in schools and classrooms.

Thus the technology of assessment is founded upon an empiricist epistemology that has its roots in the scientific and technological movement. Within this ethos, the aim of science is to achieve general public agreement about the nature of the real world through the utilisation of standardised methods for the accumulation of objective evidence. The scientific methods of systematic observation, inductive generalisation, prediction, and control have made it possible, in the empiricist view, to describe and explain the world so that the actual nature of reality is revealed as it exists, independent of the subjective thoughts, desires, or interests of the observer. This view culminated in a theory of scientific knowledge that is now referred to as *positivism*. The fundamental tenet of this theory is the *principle of verifiability*, which is that the truth of any proposition rests on its correspondence to what exists in the outside world. Truth is correspondence with phenomena as verified by experience or observation. Thus, all valid (and certain) knowledge claims are contained within the boundaries of science, which, by definition, is the systematic study of observable phenomena capable of explanation by general laws.

Within the social sciences, the positivist view has produced an emphasis upon experimental methods involving large samples, control groups, measurement, and quantification. Moreover, the adoption of such a model has had direct political consequences (Fay 1975; Bernstein 1976). Not only have science and technology become the most influential productive forces

in advanced industrial societies, but most areas of social life, including schooling, are now dominated by what Habermas (1970, 1973) has called a *technological consciousness*. It is not surprising, therefore, that a wide acceptance of this positivist view of social science has been accompanied by an unquestioning utilisation of forms of educational assessment that apply quantification and measurement within relatively fixed and supposedly 'objective' category systems.

These category systems, maintained by standardised, norm-referenced testing procedures, encompass both cognitive and non-cognitive domains. The two main cognitive systems are for the categorisation of achievement and mental ability. The main non-cognitive system is for the categorisation of personal and moral attributes, including conduct, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships. But the basis for categorisation is never a complete description of the individual; it is always a partial description, based on selected information. Thus, in focusing upon certain characteristics that seem important in the teaching–learning situation, other characteristics, which seem less relevant, will be overlooked. Even the best knowledge about a student provides the teacher with only a partial picture of that individual as he or she really is. It needs to be recognised, moreover, that although teachers and administrators have an unlimited supply of information available to them (documents, observations, reports, tests, etc.), they have very restricted opportunities to get to know students as individuals. Nevertheless, teachers and principals are constantly called upon to make different kinds of assessments of individuals as part of the selection and allocation of students into politically preordained structural categories.

Thus, the structural hegemony of assessment and categorisation is maintained at the level of educational practice through the belief that there are 'objective' differences between individuals that justify their differential treatment within institutions (Carlson 1980–81). This belief in 'objectivity' is endorsed by a complex technology of assessment such that it becomes so deeply embedded in the professional common sense of teachers and administrators as to be immune, in most instances, from ideological critique.

But ideological critique leading to some degree of structural transformation would still be possible if, through the individual agency of educational administrators, there were to be a rejection of these positivist forms of student assessment in favour of more procedures of an interpretive and dialectical kind. Such procedures could be based on the Piagetian clinical interview for instance (Codd 1981, 1982). The central aim of this approach is not to establish 'objective' categories or measurable outcomes, but to discover what learning experiences *mean* to those involved in them, what their point of view is, and by what concepts, principles, or frames of reference they make sense of their world. When assessments are based on this constructivist epistemology, they can provide a basis for action that is informed by critical, rather than technological, consciousness. Such procedures as the Piagetian interview not only assist the teacher to enrich and develop his or her own teaching, but can also become the basis for an evaluation of curricula that involves a dialogue with pupils (and also parents) concerning what is being learned and how best to provide various kinds of learning in the future. Under these conditions, ideological critique

becomes possible, for as Kaufman suggests:

> Any application of Piaget's constructivism as a system of education reform must be viewed within the total context of social and political reform . . .
>
> For a society to advocate a process of schooling that has as its primary objective the development of critical thinking and reasoning, as is suggested by Piaget's constructivism, is to ask that society question the basic assumptions underlying its political ideology (Kaufman 1978, p. 40).

This questioning implies the replacement of all forms of technical or managerial control with a counter-hegemonic praxis in which action can become the focus of self-critical reflection. It requires the rejection of positivism in favour of a constructivist epistemology such as that conceived by radical thinkers like Gramsci, Piaget, and Freire. These thinkers have given us an epistemological framework for educational administration that can enable administrators to act effectively in the interests of those who should be the beneficiaries of their actions, rather than in the interests of those who happen to hold greater social power. This constructivist framework is more than a mere philosophy of action, it is the very process of translating philosophy into social action.

Towards a dialectic of theory and practice

If administrators are to become critically conscious of the epistemological issues relating to knowledge, action, and power, they must first clear up some common misapprehensions concerning the place of theory in social life. Foremost among these misapprehensions is the belief that social theories are discovered in a context that is quite separate from their application. On this view, social scientists are thought to be necessarily engaged in constructing theories, whereas administrators are not; conversely, administrators are thought to be necessarily engaged in political practice, whereas social scientists are not. It is assumed, in other words, that the task of social scientists is to produce a body of knowledge encompassing various administrative theories and domains of policy science, which administrators may then either ignore or take up and convert into social action. Thus, the social theorist is taken to be the technical servant of the administrators, giving rise to what Fay (1975) calls 'the technological view of politics'.

Behind this technological view is the assumption that social science research makes available to administrators a theoretical basis upon which to decide the 'best means' of achieving certain predetermined goals. Thus, policy science and administrative theory are relegated to a totally instrumental function, succinctly described by Fay in the following terms:

> A policy science is supposed to be a device for organising political thought in a rational way, merely a method for clarifying empirical relationships among alternative actions for sorting out their likely consequences, and a procedure for making 'correct' decisions; as such, it is supposed to be employable by anyone, regardless of his political views, for any end whatsoever, and its results are supposed to be

> impartial in the sense of not being dependent upon the particular evaluations of the policy scientist for their truth (Fay 1975, p. 57).

Such a position is based upon the separation of 'facts' from 'values'. Hence, it is assumed that administrators can derive their values from one source and ascertain the facts of the situation from another, completely independent source: in particular, the organisational theorist or the behavioural scientist. This implies that the goals (of a school, for example) are politically determined and institutionally located in one context while, in another context, the social scientist can be considered competent only to recommend the 'best means' or the most economical /effective /functional procedures that are instrumental to attaining those already posited goals. Thus we have the simplistic identification of decisions concerning means with the factual side of the fact–value dichotomy.

This kind of common-sense rationality seeks to drive a wedge between the executive and the contemplative dimensions of social theory, implying that there is a logical gap between theory and practice, facts and values. In the educational domain, it has the effect of creating a problem of communication between social scientists /theorists and educational administrators /practitioners. Consequently, either the former are blamed for constructing theories that are too abstract or too complex for practical implementation, or the latter are blamed for holding unhelpful attitudes towards theory and stubbornly resisting change. But on critical reflection, following the discussion above, it can be seen that each of these arguments misconstrues the necessary political dimensions of educational theorising and the central importance of the social context in which educational practice takes place. The theorist is always a practitioner and the practitioner is always a theorist: for each must be concerned with the relevant facts and neither can avoid the value dilemma inherent in the choice of standards of what is to count as evidence or proof that one social policy is 'better' than another, or that the most efficient /effective means are therefore the 'best' that could be adopted.

The significance of this value dilemma for the administrator is profound. For not only are there institutional values to be articulated and defended through administrative practice, but there are also values that are inherent within the very process of policy formation itself. As Fay makes clear,

> all political decisions, even those which are seen as means to an end, are social policies, and as such they embody a notion of what people ought to be required or permitted to do to others. No social policy's worth can be solely instrumental because any such policy will require that people interact with one another in certain definite ways, and for this reason it must have a moral value *in itself* . . . *All* political proposals, no matter how instrumental, will alter and shape the personal relations of at least some of the members of a society, and will affect the relative welfare of various classes of people; as such they embody moral notions as to what is permissible, just, or right in human affairs. They are a species of moral statement (Fay 1975, p. 52).

Thus, it is clear that administrative action is necessarily a form of moral action and as such it must always come to rest upon fundamental cultural or ideological assumptions, hypotheses, or beliefs about the nature of social

reality. The point of this discussion is to suggest that social science, no less than common sense, must be subjected to philosophical critique if it is to provide a counter-hegemonic view of social reality upon which moral action ought to be based.

All of this is not to deny that there is an important sense in which administrators are not like social scientists. They are more concerned with using knowledge than with seeking it, with application than with abstraction, with problem solving than with problem finding. But this points to a difference of focus or emphasis rather than a substantive difference of kind. Both administrators and social scientists are necessarily engaged in arriving at judgements based upon interpretations of social reality.

Carr (1980) makes an important distinction between 'the theory of theoretical practices' and 'the theory of educational practices'. Basically, it is the blurring of this distinction that gives rise to the so-called 'communication gap' between administrators and social theorists. The central point of Carr's argument is that theory and practice are not located in separate places, waiting to be somehow 'brought together'. He argues, in a similar vein to Gramsci, Piaget, and Freire, that all practice is inevitably theory laden. Thus 'anybody engaged in educational pursuits must, no less than anybody engaged in theoretical pursuits, already possess some "theory" in virtue of which his practices are conducted and his achievements are assessed' (Carr 1980, p. 64).

The point at issue is whether the 'theory' that guides practice is opened up to critical scrutiny or kept contained within the unquestioned confines of common sense. It is a notion of theory that comes from the critique of social action itself. Such theory 'stems from a recognition of the fact that the problems it seeks to confront only arise for and can only be resolved by educational practitioners' (Carr 1980, p. 67).

Now, this is a very different view of theory from the one that is often assumed by educational administrators. It no longer makes sense, for instance, to speak of practitioners choosing their theories in the way that a mechanic chooses an appropriate spanner:

> In so far as educational theory seeks to help practitioners to confront their problems more effectively, then the concrete practical experiences out of which these problems are generated provides both the subject-matter for theoretical enquiry and the testing ground on which the results of this enquiry must be assessed (Carr 1980, p. 67).

From this point of view, educational administration, like any other form of social action, can be understood only in relation to the context in which it occurs. Thus, depending on the social context, administrators will focus on some aspects of a situation to the exclusion of others, they will direct their decisions towards some purposes rather than others, they will consider some people's interests more than others. In this sense, administration is an inherently political activity because the central aim is one of selective action rather than one of simply understanding.

A critical theory of educational administration, therefore, will be one that rejects positivist assumptions about 'objective' categories of social experience. It will seek to develop interpretive contextual categories, recognising that many of the consequential actions people perform are in-

fluenced by social conditions and constrained by structures over which they have no control. Most importantly, it will be 'built on the explicit recognition that social theory is interconnected with social practice, such that what is to count as truth is partially determined by the specific ways in which scientific theory is supposed to relate to practical action' (Fay 1975, p. 94).

This concept of 'critical theory' is derived from the philosophical writings of the Frankfurt School (Held 1980) and it does not presuppose any particular theory of social structure or any particular conception of human nature, except the important belief that human beings are agents and that their behaviour is properly described by action concepts. In these terms, a critical theory 'is a reflective theory which gives agents a kind of knowledge inherently productive of enlightenment and emancipation' (Geuss 1981, p. 2). In keeping with Freire's notion of 'concientization', a critical theory will have an educative role. Its methods will be both philosophical and empirical, seeking to produce not quasi-causal explanations of social conditions, but knowledge that will 'enlighten the social actors so that, coming to see themselves and their social situation in a new way, they themselves can decide to alter the conditions which they find repressive' (Fay 1975, p. 103).

Conclusion

Basically, there are three distinct ways in which educational administrators come to hold theories that will shape and determine their practice. The first is by taking up the conceptual orientations contained within an extant body of 'theory' derived from the endeavours of those who make a scientific study of educational administration. The second is by following the promptings of habit, convention, and intuition derived from personal experience and contained within the domain of common sense. The third is by a philosophical critique of practice in which deliberative action is derived from a combination of empirical and interpretive modes of inquiry that have been brought to bear upon both the public domain of extant theory and the private domain of common sense. This introductory essay has argued strongly for the third of these alternatives, contending that it not only prepares the ground for an educational praxis that is truly emancipatory, but that it also recognises the political potency of infusing social action with philosophical reflection.

The foregoing discussion has attempted to set out some of the requirements for a new philosophy of educational administration. Essentially, it comprises a rejection of the philosopher's spectatorial role, imbued as it is with idealist assumptions, and a reconstruction of the relationship between philosophical epistemology and action. By taking Gramsci's conception of philosophy as being a counter-hegemonic critique of common sense, the traditional dichotomy between reflection and action is shown to be untenable. Indeed, when it is construed in this way, philosophy ceases to be mere armchair speculation and becomes capable of freeing agents from a kind of coercion that is at least partly self-imposed. Philosophy can free agents from the self-frustration of common-sense beliefs that have the effect of preventing those agents from determining what their true interests

are and hence acting in accordance with those interests.

Some important connections have been suggested between Gramsci's conception of human agency and Piagetian structuralism. These indicate the central role of action in the transformation of consciousness at the cognitive level. While social and developmental structures constrain individual action in a variety of ways, it is possible to transform these structures through the emergence of critical consciousness. This indeed is the goal of a liberating form of education that Paulo Freire has referred to as 'concientization'. This form of education, moreover, requires reflective action, or praxis, that is based on dialogue and historical commitment. Providing the conditions for this praxis is a political agenda for the educational administrator that can be achieved only when the common-sense categories and assumptions of professional practice are subjected to rigorous and continuing ideological critique.

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Readings

1 Philosophers of education: detached spectators or political practitioners?

Kevin Harris

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(i) PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: AFTER THE "REVOLUTION"

A significant feature in the development of philosophy over the last half-century has been the emergence, and wide-spread acceptance, of the notion that philosophy is a *second-order* activity. Philosophers, it has variously been claimed, ought not pontificate or be prescriptive about "first-order" activities and issues, but ought rather to analyse, map, or describe them; and from this point of view the job of the philosopher is seen to be that which Marx objected to in his "Theses on Feuerbach", namely describing the world rather than changing it. Philosophy, on this account, becomes an analytic and descriptive tool; on its own both inappropriate and impotent with regard to bringing about change: it is something which, as Wittgenstein suggested in the *Investigations,* leaves everything as it is.

The emergence and (in places) acceptance of this view has come to be known popularly as the "revolution in philosophy"; a "revolution" which, in turn, has been instrumental in the growth of various *meta* studies, more concerned with the logic and language of their fields of enquiry than with making judgments and prescriptions about the substantive matter of those fields. Moral Philosophy in the U.K., for instance, turned towards meta-ethics, and put aside the study of substantive ethical issues in favour of examining the language of moral discourse. And this latter activity, or 'second-order' investigation, was held by many, A. J. Ayer and R. M. Hare included, to be ideally and potentially *normatively neutral;* such that the proper philosophic study of morals (including substance, methodology, and findings) was to be unaffected and in no way influenced by the particular moral viewpoint of the philosopher.

Education, too, was similarly affected. As an academic discipline education had, in the past, frequently suffered invasions by historians, theorists, psychologists, and sociologists; yet had been treated with somewhat scant respect by philosophers. Following the "revolution", however, it was looked at again with new eyes by people who now came to see this area as a potentially fertile one for "second-order" exploration; by people who, while not going to the lengths of explicitly advocating a normatively neutral meta-study, at least believed that education too could be probed in a "second-order" fashion

unaffected and uninfluenced by one's particular educational viewpoint, and who then directed their activities towards that end.

While C. D. Hardie, D. J. O'Connor, and Israel Scheffler are clearly recognisable as familial forefathers in the evolution of this process, it fell historically to R. S. Peters to give birth to what was to develop into legitimate "post-revolutionary" philosophy of education, and also lead and engineer the legitimation process itself. The moment of birth can probably be most accurately located in the deliverance of Peters' Inaugural Lecture on his taking up the chair in Philosophy of Education at the University of London Institute of Education in 1963: the legitimation process began at the Institute almost immediately, and in the course of a decade spread far beyond that site.[1]

Peters, it would appear, had little doubt as to what real philosophy of education ought to be. Of his Inaugural Lecture he wrote: " . . . it does at least provide signposts to *the central issues* with which the philosophy of education *must* be concerned";[2] and in the Preface to *Ethics and Education* he states:

> But this is one of the main reasons for publishing a book somewhat prematurely. The point is to provide a few signposts for others and to map the contours of *the* field for others to explore in a more leisurely and detailed manner. The important thing in the philosophy of education is that *something should be there to indicate what it is and to provide a determinate structure on which students can train their critical faculties.* [Philosophy of education] . . . will only develop as a rigorous field of study if a few philosophers are prepared to plough premature furrows which run more or less in *the right direction.*[3]

We should note in passing here the nature of Peters' extended metaphor. "Signposts", "field", "furrows", "contours" and "determinate structure" all serve to indicate that philosophy of education has some form of existential reality: that it lies in the world newly discovered and awaiting further exploration. I suggest that this sort of categorisation, while it might be applicable to things like Australia and electricity is inappropriate and misrepresentative when applied to human theoretic production.[4]

A second, and more important thing to recognise, however, is that Peters' notions were anything but the products of whimsical fancy; they themselves were determined in large part by the particular view which Peters held of philosophy. It is important, therefore, that we recognise how Peters (and some others) saw the nature of philosophy, and thus the nature of philosophy of education.

Peters was quite basically influenced by the "revolution in philosophy," the main characteristic of which, he claims, "has been an increased awareness of what philosophy is."[5] Interestingly, an increased awareness, not merely a change of awareness or direction. Peters notes that philosophers have not begun to do "something startlingly different":

> . . . rather they have become more increasingly aware of what is distinctive of philosophical enquiries and more cautious about making pronouncements on matters which are not strictly philosophical in character.[6]

"The distinctive feature of philosophic enquiries", Peters indicates, "is their second-order character";[7]

> The main feature, then, of the recent 'revolution in philosophy' has been the explicit recognition of this second-order character of philosophical enquiries.[8]

Such a claim is continually repeated: for instance, in tandem with P. H. Hirst we find Peters again declaring that philosophy:

> . . . is an activity which is distinguished by its concern with certain types of second-order questions, with questions of a reflective sort which arise when activities like science, painting pictures, worshipping, and making moral judgments are going concerns.[9]

and that philosophy:

> . . . is concerned with second-order questions about science, morality, religion and other such human activities.[10]

Now it should be obvious that these statements represent little more than a declaration of faith (an impression not dissipated by close reading of the full texts), and nothing more than stipulative definitions of what philosophy is—and thus *is not* (a point we shall return to later). Also, by themselves they tell us nothing about these "second-order" enquiries or questions which mark out the philosophical; and for clarification here we must go back to the sources, from which two things emerge.

First we find a central concern with *conceptual analysis* and *justification.* For Hirst and Peters, philosophy "is concerned with questions about the analysis of concepts, and with questions about the grounds of knowledge, belief, actions and activities";[11] while for Peters the professional philosopher's "stock in trade" has become:

> The disciplined demarcation of concepts, [and] the patient explication of the grounds of knowledge and of the presuppositions of different forms of discourse . . .[12]

This is carried directly across to philosophy of education; the first main issue of which is "the analysis of concepts specific to education—such as 'education', 'teaching', 'training', and 'university' and 'school'";[13] and where the philosopher "has to apply analysis of concepts and theories of justification developed in the various branches of philosophy."[14]

The second, and for our purposes the most important thing that emerges, is the way that the "second-order" character of philosophical enquiries casts the philosopher, and the philosopher of education, into the role of a *spectator.* Since this "spectator image" is central to Peters' notion of philosophy and philosophy

of education, it is important to examine what packs into it, and what is allowed to follow from it.

For Peters, philosophers are necessarily spectators, but spectators are not necessarily philosophers. The philosopher is distinguished from other spectators by "the type of second-order questions which he asks";[15] he is allied with them by the manner in which he asks his particular type of "second-order" questions. Thus:

> The image of the spectator is an appropriate one; for just as a spectator, to a certain extent, detaches himself from the activities of which he is a spectator in order to watch and comment on them, so also does a philosopher detachedly ponder upon and probe into activities and forms of discourse in which he and others engage.[16]

Philosophers, it would appear, are *detached from the objects they investigate.* How this is achieved is not stated directly, but it further appears that doing conceptual analysis—the central philosophic activity—is both a product of being detached, as well as an aid in achieving detachment. Thus:

> [Conceptual analysis] also *enables us to stand back a bit* on the status of the demand to which the word bears witness. *It frees us* to ask [fundamental questions of justification . . . it] is a necessary preliminary to answering some *other* philosophical questions.[17]

and:

> For a much clearer grasp of the fundamental issues underlying current controversies is made possible by mapping the area of the concepts and revealing the contours of the criteria built into them. But *a detached and clear-sighted view of the shape of issues and institutions is all that conceptual analysis provides.* It cannot of itself determine the lines of practical policy.[18]

Now it should be clear, even from these short statements, that certain things are being built in to, or allowed to follow from, the "detached second-order" activity of the philosopher. Whereas it appeared earlier that the philosopher watched, commented, pondered, and probed; it appears now that by doing such things in a detached manner he is freed from certain pressures, he is able to be impartial, and that the view he gains (or is *provided with*) is a particularly clear-sighted one. Philosophic activity and commentary, therefore, is being loaded with a very particular value—a further point we shall return to. It is also, however, being very strictly limited in scope. Philosophers, Peters tells us:

> . . . make explicit the conceptual schemes which [competing] beliefs and standards presuppose; they examine their consistency and search for criteria for their justification.[19]

but, while they help sort out issues involved in principles, they cannot "*qua* philosopher[s] . . . pronounce on the truth of such principles."[20] The proper work of philosophy is thus once again located in clarification and justification at

the "second-order" level, and to this extent it is divorced from active intervention in first-order struggles. As Hirst and Peters conclude:

> The point of philosophy is neither to prophesy nor necessarily to change the world. It is rather to get our predicament into a *proper* perspective, and to grasp better what reasons are good reasons for changing or for keeping things as they are.[21]

Let us now summarise the situation as we have it so far.

Philosophy, and then philosophy of education, have been defined as "second-order activities". Undertaking a "second-order activity" requires the adoption of a spectatorial role in that one becomes *detached* from one's object of investigation; and the philosopher becomes distinguished from other spectators by the type of questions he asks. Now, how one becomes detached, and what are particularly philosophic questions (other than their being of a "second-order" nature) is not made clear. What does become clear, however, is that the notion of "detachment" is implicitly and significantly inflated, and that the philosopher becomes placed in a particularly privileged position.

'Detachment', as we have already noted, is seen as enabling one to achieve a certain objectivity (being freed from other pressures), impartiality, and clear-sightedness. It also embraces the notion of 'distancing' (standing back a bit); and it seems to allow for or help bring about both neutrality and something approximating omniscience, since the detached philosopher is well placed to arbitrate among beliefs and standards, and also to get our predicament in a *proper* perspective.

The privileged role of the philosopher emerges partly in concordance with the inflation of the idea of 'detachment'. We noted earlier that, on this model, philosophic activity is value-loaded. If we were now to admit the full implications of the notion of 'detachment' which has been laid before us, we would find that philosophic activities, the probings and the findings, emerge as particularly worthwhile in comparison to non-detached non-philosophic activities which, virtually by definition, are one-eyed, biassed, politically motivated, involved, cloudy, emotive, polemical and so on. The very definition of the philosophic process has built in the inevitable superiority of a particular philosophic product.

The second way in which the philosopher takes on a privileged position is through his involvement *qua* philosopher only with "second-order" activities, which, by clear implication, are themselves inflated in value over "first-order" activities. The philosopher sorts out, clarifies, and gets into perspective, the "first-order" predicaments of the world. Thus philosophy emerges from this model as it did from the Platonic dialogues, namely as 'Queen of the sciences'; and the philosopher-spectator is once again seated in the Royal Box (only this time as official spokesperson rather than legislator). The philosopher, (*qua* philosopher) is set 'above and beyond' (although tenuously connected with) political action, historical transformation, and any other forms of "first-order" human action.

A third aspect of philosophic privilege arises out of the relative immunity given to the role by its practitioners. By definition, only those who accept the procedure of asking "second-order" questions (and who are judged competent to do so) can probe the activities of philosophers or philosophy in a philosophically respectable way. Put simply, only a philosopher of the right persuasion can (legitimately) criticise philosophy. What we find here is a closed school—to query points in a colleague's analysis of the concept of "punishment" is acceptable; to query the very worth of conceptual analysis *per se* is to risk being charged with failing to understand philosophy; and to probe the role of, say, schooling within a social structure, is to be accused of doing sociology—itself a worthwhile task, but hardly philosophy. Particular activities, unable to be judged or criticised by people neither competent in nor desirous of performing them, are thus bestowed with *epistemic* privilege. But since there are no objective tests for competence in this area, nor are competence requirements spelt out, the matter reduces to judgments made by the practising professionals, such that the "epistemic privilege" is nothing more than an extension of professional privilege, or a stipulation made by those in power: and the inevitable superiority of certain philosophical activities is again ensured simply through definition of the philosophic process.[22]

It should be clear from this that if cogent criticism is to be levelled at the closed model of philosophy before us, (and with it the "post-revolutionary" model of philosophy of education), then such criticism would do well to be directed primarily at the structure on which the model is based. In the following section I shall attack this fundamental structure through a critical examination of the basic notion of "detachment".

(ii) SPECTATORS, INVESTIGATORS, PHILOSOPHERS, & DETACHMENT

For the purpose of beginning discussion I take it, albeit tentatively, that spectators (and investigators) are detached from the activities they are watching or investigating in the minimal sense that they are not actually participating in those activities. This is not to accept, however, that all such instances of detachment are identical; nor is it to accept that *any* notion of "detachment" can entail the features noted in the previous section. I shall argue in this section that the "detached spectator" analogy is an inappropriate one to apply to philosophers, and then that the very notion of "detachment" (as it has been spelt out) is an idealist fiction; finally I shall indicate that, for quite different reasons, the "detached spectator" analogy has a unique *inappropriateness* to philosophy of education.

I have argued elsewhere in some detail that all investigations of the world (including philosophical investigations, of course) are theory-laden; that we inevitably approach objects in a theory-laden way; that theory does not arise secondarily out of neutral investigations (although investigations might result in modifications to theory); that theories have an essential socio-historic element to them; that theories, being expressed through language, necessarily embody further historical-cultural factors; and that it is simply impossible to produce an a-theoretic, a-historic, a-social account of anything. For convenience I shall refer to this as the theory-ladenness thesis.[23]

Now the theory-ladenness thesis indicates to us that we do not determine what science and cricket are by making inferences from watching what scientists and cricket players do. The case is rather that we order, categorise, and possibly evaluate the activities before us in terms of our theories of what science and cricket are. To be spectators of these activities, then, (as distinguished from accidental and/or naive observers) requires having, first and foremost, theories of what science and cricket are.[24] And these theories, as we shall see, are value-laden or normative.

Theories as to what science and cricket *are* automatically mark out at the same time what science and cricket *are not*. But things which science and cricket *are not* fall into two categories. On the one hand there are those things which are specifically distinctive; such that soccer or ballet or bicycle riding tend not to be counted as cricket: while on the other hand there are "corruptions" which may or may not be taken as "measuring up"; such that vigaro, limited-over matches, or the Packer variations might be considered to be just not cricket. We see, therefore, that to name something "science" or "cricket" (or anything) is to differentiate it from that which it is clearly not—this being largely (although not necessarily) a value-free exercise—and *at the same time* to differentiate it from "corruptions" which we wouldn't honour with the name—this latter being a distinctly value-laden normative exercise. Thus we see that, at the most basic of levels, naming anything at any time necessarily entails a value-judgment.

This is not to say, however, that all instances of "naming" would be equally value-laden. One relevant factor to consider here would be the particular things we are distinguishing our named instances from, and how precisely the distinctions can be made. Naming an instance "cricket" to distinguish it from "soccer" would hardly entail much of a value judgment at all; but naming something "science" to distinguish it from "astrology" is quite a different matter. In the former case the instances are quite clearly defined and differentiated, and there are even precise laws which can be referred to which stringently define each activity. In the latter case, however, the instances are anything but clearly differentiated; they are not precisely defined, nor are they accountable to definitive laws which mark out their boundaries.

If we now consider the more general issue of those sorts of instances with which spectators are commonly associated (like sports, concerts, fires, processions, etc.) *viz a viz* instances of human theoretic production (like science, history, philosophy, art, education, etc.), we find that the point discussed above can be generalised. Cricket, croquet, concerts and coronations tend not to be confused with each other, or with other similar things. Spectators name them in terms of clear definitions and precise reference points (against which statements can be checked and errors corrected); and rarely does a spectator, *qua* spectator, name them in the evaluative sense of distinguishing them from "corruptions". With areas of human theortetic production, however, things are quite different.

There are no definitive statements, let alone clear consensus, to mark out the boundaries of science or history or art or philosophy. There are no laws of science paralleling the laws of cricket; there are no fixed rules for historians or philosophers; there are no codified forms which characterise the works of artists or works of art. What we have here, then, are fields of production whose boundaries are very imprecise (if they exist at all); and to include something within these fields is to do so in the absence of precise determined reference points. The decision to make (or not make) such an inclusion must entail a value judgment. And the nature of this value judgment becomes even more obvious when the decision is made, even implicitly, in terms of differentiating fields from "corruptions" or "lower forms" or "less worthy" productions.

When some discourse is named "philosophy" while other discourse is referred to as "chatter"; when some investigations of the world are named "science" whereas others are named "witchcraft", "alchemy" or "random observations"; when some paintings are named "art" and others "commercialism"; and when some recountings of the past are named "history" in contrast to others named "reminiscences" or "fiction"; then value has automatically been ascribed to the chosen contenders, whichever they may be. Disregarding the uninteresting possibility of a cultural milieu where no distinction is made between, say, philosophy and chatter or science and witchcraft—uninteresting because there would be no point in such discriminative naming—we find that "philosophy" and "chatter", "science" and "witchcraft", etc. are value-laden names (and especially so when used in contrast with each other) regardless of which are ascribed the positive value in any particular socio-historical setting. In fact Peters himself, in the very works we are examining here, holds not only to this position but to an even stronger one; claiming that activities like "science", "art" and "philosophy" are not only valued within particular forms of life, but also that they are "worthwhile in themselves" (intrinsically valuable). When he states:

> Philosophy, art and science are forms of activity which are worthwhile in themselves; they are part and parcel of a form of life which we think desirable.[25]

he is clearly adopting a normative stance to the named activities (which he must) in distinct contrast to the stance required of a "detached spectator".

One further point worth noting here is that naming fields of theoretic production, in the sense of either distinguishing "philosophy" from "rhetoric" or differentiating between "philosophy" and "sociology" (a common thorny problem produced by the mix between epistemology and "sociology of knowledge" theses) is in fact a complex exercise involving making ever-finer distinctions supported by delicate and cogent arguments. Such exercises and commentary are commonly graced with the title of *philosophy*, and clearly they stand in marked *contrast* to the sorts of activities and commentary commonly undertaken by spectators. In fact this sort of endeavour is often cited to *distinguish* the philosopher from the spectator, and thus on another ground we

can question the appropriateness of the philosopher/spectator analogy, especially in areas concerned with theoretic production.

In summary, then, we see that being a spectator involves first having a theory of whatever is under observation or scrutiny; or in other words, naming the game. Naming the game, however, is necessarily a value-laden activity, such that the spectator's relationship to the game is always a normative one—although often in a very weak sense. When the game in question, however, is human theoretic production, the normative element in naming it is quite strong, and the action in naming it begins to differ markedly from that practised by "ordinary" spectators. Thus we see that not only is the notion of the *"detached"* (in a non-normative sense) spectator an inappropriate one in general, but also that it is a particularly inappropriate one to carry over to fields of theoretic production; where naming things "philosophy" or "history" or "art" is to engage in the sorts of fine discriminations "ordinary spectators" don't make; where such naming *is* to embrace particular value-laden viewpoints of what these activities are; and where to investigate these activities necessarily entails commitment to specific value-laden theories regarding their nature and practice.

Now it might be the case of course, that few philosophers deny holding, say, scientific or educational or ethical theories: an extended claim, however, that one's (second order) philosophical investigations are or can be unaffected by these theories would be clearly mistaken. Philosophic investigations are always influenced by the value-laden theoretic viewpoint of what the object in question is; and thus the philosopher, being in this sense "normatively related" to his or her object, stands *in marked contrast to* what has been implied by the notion of a detached spectator; and also in some contrast to the every-day spectator. (We note also that a non-normative theoretic relationship would, of course, be impossible to *sustain* even if it were once achieved, given that there is not, nor can there be, a neutral non-normative meta-language in which the philosopher might describe, interpret or account for the statements and activities which occur within the parameters of his or her investigation.)[24]

I turn now to my second concern, namely indicating that the notion of "detachment" which has been put before us is an idealist fiction. I shall do this by unpacking, piece by piece, those features which were implicitly built into or associated directly with the notion.

Let us begin with the idea of *distancing* (in other contexts often blown up into an esoteric ideal of "academic distancing"), whereby the spectator stands back sufficiently from the "object" under investigation (or becomes sufficiently detached from it) such that he or she "is" able to see all aspects of it clearly, and all aspects surrounding it clearly. By paying attention to *all* points of view, surveying *all* literature, and leaving no stone unturned, the spectator is thus, so it is claimed, able to report on the object *fairly, impartially, objectively,* and in a *balanced* fashion.

The theory-ladenness thesis, however, in demonstrating that there cannot be an a-theoretic platform from which to investigate anything—no matter how far distant we go—reveals such a position to be nonsense. It also indicates (although this point could be made in other ways) that it is impossible to take note of *all* aspects of an object, or *all* aspects surrounding an object: we cannot consider *all* sides of a question. The best we can hope for is to marshall as much relevant evidence as possible; and it is, of course, *our theoretic perspective which determines what we shall count as relevant.* A key feature of any investigation is the theoretic stance of the investigator (which is inextricably tied up with historical, political, and social factors), not distancing or detachment; and philosophers who claim they are being a-theoretical, a-social and a-historical (or objective, impartial, balanced, and distanced) are deluding at least themselves.

Let us now consider the relationship between "detachment" and *clear-sightedness.* It should be immediately obvious that, even if we admit the full implications of the detached spectator, it still does not necessarily follow that he or she will be more clear-sighted, or even be better placed to be more clear-sighted, than those down on the field. Even if it were the case that the spectator in the stand could get a clear, panoramic view, this in no way ensures that he or she might be able to see the whole field; nor does it preclude that a subtle tug on a striker's shirt as he leaps for a header might be visible only to a couple of players within very close range, or that certain scientists might have a far clearer idea of their colleagues' activities than the current resident philosopher has. It seems to be something akin to pretention, rather than facility, which links "detached second-order investigations" with "clear-sightedness".[27]

In much the same vein, there seems to be little basis for suggesting, or implying, that "detached second-order investigations" either will be *neutral* or are better placed for being neutral, with regard to "first-order" activities—the theory-ladenness thesis denies the very possibility of this—or that they will (or can, or are better placed to) lead to neutral *resolutions* regarding competing "first-order" activities. This latter hope flies in the face of the very image which carries it, for is is a significant feature of commentators that they often muddy the waters and produce competing, conflicting, and antagonistic accounts of the activities which they are pondering over or probing. Take, for instance, the accounts of the history and development of science given by Popper, Kuhn, and Feyerabend. Each account is compelling, yet conflicts openly with the other two; and neither separately nor collectively do they resolve anything about science. It appears more the case that *they* represent a level of competing beliefs, one which could equally be seen to stand in need of some "detached pondering and reflection". And if this were the case then how shall we categorise the investigations philosophers of philosophy of science undertake while philosophers of science engage in "second-order" investigations of science? Let it suffice simply to indicate here that there are complex problems involved in determining where doing science, philosophising about science, and philosophising about philosophy of science, begin and end; such that the very distinction between first-

order activities (doing science) and second-order activities (as characterised above; i.e. reflecting and pondering about science), might be regarded as being, at best, tenuous.[28]

Our last point against "detachment" is the elementary recognition that we simply cannot, under any circumstances, get things into their *proper* perspective. The very best that we can do is indicate how an object appears from a particular perspective; and we might then argue for the worth in looking at it from the particular perspective we have chosen. But there is no detached, distanced point from which we might see it *properly*.

It would be of interest in this regard to consider how we might recognise a proper viewpoint of anything if someone were to ever present us with one. If we were to judge Feyerabend's perspective on science to be proper (as against superior to Kuhn's) what grounds could we possibly have for doing so? Somehow we would have to be able to see this "proper perspective" in *its* proper perspective, and thus we find ourselves on a regress. The very attempt to get things into proper perspective is badly misconceived; and in no sense of the word could "detachment" assist in performing this impossible mission.

I have shown in the previous paragraphs that the notion of "detachment", as we have been presented with it, is an idealist fiction. Certain aspects which have either been packed into the notion or else have been clearly implied, aspects like objectivity, neutrality, impartiality, and balance—are fictional in their own right; and certain desired expectations, like clear-sightedness, the ability to arbitrate, and the ability to get things into their proper perspective, either need not necessarily follow or would not necessarily follow from the enterprise. To conclude this section I shall now consider the manner in which the "detached spectator" image is uniquely inappropriate for philosophy of education.

If we begin with the *very minimum* we have accepted previously, namely that spectators are not actually participating in the activities they are observing, we find that even this much does not hold for philosophy of education. Spectators at a soccer match are certainly not playing soccer; whether philosophers of science or history are or are not "doing" science or history is a far more debatable point. But philosophers of education certainly *are* "doing" education. Whilever they are writing, holding seminars, conferring, publishing, and teaching they are a very part of the educational process, such that, rather than being detached from education they are, in fact, necessarily involved in it. To undertake philosophy of education professionally is to engage in education: thus to become a spectator, or detached spectator, is to cease being a philosopher of education. The intended analogy entails a contradiction, and the professional philosopher of education, whatever else he or she might do, cannot adopt the role of the detached spectator, even in its weakest sense.

(iii) PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AS POLITICAL PRACTICE: SOME PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS

Given that the notion of the *philosopher* as a detached spectator does not hold, that "detachment" itself can be taken seriously only in a very weak sense, that with *philosophy of education* even this weak sense does not apply, and that the very concept and application of "second-order" activities (the "distinctive feature of philosophical enquiries") are at best questionable, it is clear that the signposts Peters erected led to a mirage. The mirage, however, was not without its appeal.

On the one hand it offered "the seductive appeal of the neutral justification". When people like Freire, Dewey, Leavis and Jeffreys write about education, the worth of what they are saying tends to be tempered with the knowledge that they are writing from particular perspectives. The same applies to educational statements issuing from organisations spreading from the far left to the far right, from educationists who are clearly progressives (A. S. Neill, John Holt etc.) or traditionalists (Hutchins, Cox), and from philosophers (like Sartre and Gramsci) who are clearly identifiable with particular "schools". In the midst of all of this there tends to be something seductive and appealing in being offered arguments supposedly untainted by politics, ideology, or personal preference, and conclusions ostensibly arrived at objectively, disinterestedly, and rationally. For instance, Peters' conclusion to *Ethics and Education,* that: "the most worthwhile features of political life are immanent in the institutions which we in fact have",[29] does have a lot going for it in that it appears to emerge as the logical culmination of a long, rational, detached argument, rather than as a statement of faith, personal preference, or emotional commitment.

The other major appeal of the mirage was the essential conservatism it promised. The task designated to philosophy, and philosophy of education was to analyse what *is* (concepts, criteria for justification etc.) and to stop short of determining practical policy; that is, to leave everything as it is, albeit hopefully in a clarified state. The end product, however, *was* to determine practical policy; the practical policy of leaving everything as it is. This was achieved negatively, by not prescribing policy issues; and positively through the ideological justificatory-description[30] of certain policy issues already in practice. Hirst and Peters, for instance, managed to "justify" in their collected works virtually every aspect of the social and educational *status quo* that might serve the interests of those wishing to preserve the *status quo,* and to present those justifications as rational, logical, and disinterested. The end result was to serve and satisfy not only a large number of people at the decision making level, but also to fulfil a necessary general ideological function of producing *"interest-free"* justifications for the continuance of social practices which actually serve particular *political* interests.

Mirages might be appealing, but they are still mirages.[31] New "signposts" should lead to something more substantial—not to a definitive field, of course, for then we too would be prescribing what philosophy of education *is,* but rather to a set of methodological principles which, unlike "detached second-order investigations", will not vaporise into the ether when we attempt to apply them, and which themselves will serve to keep the study as an open enquiry rather than a closed school.

The first of these hardly needs to be sought, for it virtually presents itself to us. Since all investigations of the world are theory-laden, it might be well if they put aside pretensions to neutrality, and began with a declaration of the theory with which they are laden; if they took the form: "This is how the object appears from this particular perspective". Philosophy of education could set out that way, but it ought not to be content with simply describing objects from particular perspectives: the process can be considerably refined, and I shall note just three ways in which this can be done.

First, the philosopher, unlike the bigot, should be prepared to question, adjust, and alter his or her perspective as the need arises. Or to put that another way, he or she should be concerned with modifying, refining, developing, and making more coherent the particular theoretic matrix that is in operation—and if necessary, even abandoning it in the face of a better one. Part of the business of philosophy of education, then, should be theorising about and developing theories.

Second, the philosopher should be aware that, since it is theories which pick out evidence, he or she would be foolhardy to rely solely on what emerged when a particular theory was in operation. The philosopher should have a broad understanding of the relationship between theory and evidence, and with this an understanding of how phenomena can present themselves in an illusory way, or even not present themselves at all, when any particular theory is operating. A second part of the business of philosophy of education, then, should be assessing the status of evidence or objects (this in contrast to describing and mapping them).

Third, if we accept that there is little point in investigating the world from a poor or misleading theoretic position, it becomes incumbent on the philosopher to establish for himself or herself a position of *critical preference;* that is, a theoretical perspective which can be shown to account for the world better than its preceding or contemporary rivals can.[32] Such a position will not reveal the world as it is, of course, nor would we expect it to be perfect: when it is faced with anomalies and problems, and its imperfections show out, we go back (or forward) to square one. But a third part of the business of philosophy of education should be the endeavour to find positions of critical preference from which to view education, which in itself requires an understanding of theory-development and theory-competition.

This particular recognition has run us quite abruptly into a second major area of consideration; the possibly self-evident one, that philosophy of education must keep its eye on its particular object. That object is "education"; and education, being basically concerned with the formal transmission of knowledge within a society, is a deliberate social process. As such, it is hardly a conceptual matter; it is a ***political*** matter. This is the first point that philosophy of education has to recognise about its object. What must also be recognised is what was indicated

earlier, namely that undertaking philosophy of education is engagement in the educational process, which in turn is involvement in a political process. Philosophy of education, to put it quite simply, has a distinct and necessary political nature about it.

The recognition that philosophers of education are involved in (rather than detached from) their object of investigation (and a political object to boot) is hardly a comforting one. It leads to quite serious problems, two of which I shall mention briefly. First, the philosopher of education has to examine a scene (education) in which he or she is participating: and since there is no stepping outside the scene or the self, techniques need to be developed for such examinations—which is a further part of the business at hand. Second, the philosopher of education, through being "immersed" in that which he or she is investigating, is a prime candidate for becoming little more than a bearer of the dominant ideological perspective generated in and legitimised by the very area of engagement itself.[33] A further part of the business of philosophy of education should be to develop techniques whereby that extremely difficult yet crucial problem can be overcome; and a significant aspect here would be gaining a thorough understanding of the operation of ideology within a social context.

So much for the "pointers" and directions. Neither they alone, nor rational argument with them, will "bring about" a new philosophy of education. Philosophers of education have to do that, by having the arguments *and by acquiring the power* within the educational complex. Quite unlike detached spectators, philosophers of education, through their *involvement* in education, help determine how education, (the academic discipline, and the social practice), is to be studied and practised. And their own specific practice—marking out their endeavour and carrying out their endeavour—is a "first-order" integral part of the educational process. In all these respects that practice is political.

The point bears repetition and emphasis. The practice of philosophy of education, no matter how it is conceived and no matter which directions it takes, is political, and as such affects social practice—and affects social practice whether the philosopher wishes it or not. Philosophy of education is never neutral to or detached from social practices; it assists variously in either maintaining them or changing them and thus cannot rest, and does not rest, with describing the world. Philosophers of education, if nothing else, should recognise rather than retreat from or disavow the full implications of their labours.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Central to the "legitimation process" were such things as the establishment of Societies, influencing publication through editing journals and series like Routledge's "International Library of *The* Philosophy of Education", and devising particular courses and prescribing them for wide audiences. The legitimation process was swift and thorough, at least for those involved with it. As early as 1969 Jim Gribble was able to assert in the opening words to his *Introduction to Philosophy of Education* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1969), "In recent years there has been a revolution in philosophy of education, following on the 'revolution in philosophy' . . ."
2. Peters, R. S., "The Philosophy of Education", in J. W. Tibble (ed.), *The Study of Education*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966, p. 69, my emphases.

3. Peters, R. S., *Ethics and Education,* George Allen and Unwin, London, 1966, p. 8, my emphases.
4. There is, of course, no particular definitive activity in the world which *is* philosophy of education. While there might be particular activities which, at any particular time or place, might *pass* as philosophy of education, or *count as* or be *recognised as* or be *acceptable as* philosophy of education; and while there might be features of activities which, in particular socio-historical circumstances, make them better or worse contenders for the title; in the final analysis philosophy of education is nothing more than that which has been *legitimated* as philosophy of education.
5. Peters, R. S., "The Philosophy of Education", *op. cit.*, p. 59.
6. *Loc, cit.*
7. *Loc. cit.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
9. Hirst, P. H. and Peters, R. S., *The Logic of Education,* Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1970, p. 2.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
12. Peters, R. S., *Ethics and Education, op. cit.*, p. 15.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
14. Hirst, P. H. and Peters, R. S., *op. cit.*, p. 17.
15. Peters, R. S., *Ethics and Education, op. cit.*, pp. 15-6.
16. *Ibid.*, We note here the inclusion, and then omission, of detachment "to a certain extent." Neither the required extent, nor the means of achieving it, are ever spelt out.
17. Hirst, P. H. and Peters, R. S., *op. cit.*, p. 9, my emphases, except for "other".
18. Peters, R. S., *Ethics and Education, op. cit.*, p. 45.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
20. Peters, R. S., "The Philosophy of Education", *op. cit.*, p. 64.
21. Hirst, P. H. and Peters, R. S., *op. cit.*, p. 131, my emphases.
22. In the earlier years Peters commonly charged critics (e.g. Woods and Dray, 1966; P. S. Wilson, 1967) with failing to understand what he (Peters) was doing *qua* philosopher. It was also a common practice of Peters, and others, to dismiss particular issues as being the concern of sociologists: one such issue was the consideration of the actual job schools do in a society; and not surprisingly philosophers tended to exclude this problem from their investigations and concentrate mainly on conceptual issues. A similar closed school was built up through the argument that one had to be an initiated liberal-rational educated person of a particular type before one could engage in serious discourse about liberalism, rationality, and education: to enter the fold meant embracing the principles in question: to remain outside illustrated one's very incapacity to discuss and criticise.
23. See K. Harris, *Education and Knowledge,* Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979; Chs. 1 and 2. The argument in question indicates clearly and centrally that commitment to theory-ladenness does not automatically commit or condemn one to theoretic relativism. At this point in this paper, however, I am concerned only to argue against the possibility of a "theory-free option".
24. Accidental and naive observers must also have some theory of what they are observing. It should be further noted that to claim all observations to be theory-laden in no way implies that any particular theory in question is necessarily correct, or good, or worthwhile.
25. "The Philosophy of Education", *op. cit.*, p. 79.
26. See the similar argument mounted by Anthony Giddens in *Studies in Social and Political Theory,* Hutchinson, London, 1977; especially p. 28.
27. As I point out in my "Peters on Schooling", (*Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 9, 1, March 1977, 33-48), Peters himself fails to gain "a clear-sighted view of the shape of issues and institutions"; his theory and practice are very much at odds.
28. This is not to suggest that there has not been worthwhile discussion of this matter, wherein important distinctions have been made: e.g. Quine's notion of "semantic ascent" in *Word and Object,* M.I.T. Press, Massachusetts, 1960. That which Quine identifies, however, as ascent from talk about objects to talk about words is by no means equivalent to the "second-order character" or "second-order questions" which Peters and Hirst take as the distinguishing feature of philosophy; and as Quine further indicates, this manoeuvre, while frequently employed by philosophers, has far wider usage such that it is hardly distinctive as a *philosophic* move. (My thanks to Brian Haig for bringing this latter point to my attention).
29. *Op. cit.*, p. 319.
30. For "ideological justificatory-description" see K. Harris, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-74; 95-106. Part of the very core of the functioning of ideology is that interest-serving elements are so *built in to* the

methodology and language of investigation that the results of investigation *bear* these elements "naturally"; such that what appears to be neutral, detached description is really interest-serving justification: the issues ostensibly being mapped are supported through the very act of being "described".

31. This is hardly to suggest that "intellectual appeal" alone accounted for the acceptance. There was also a large political network of support, including editors of journals, publishers, and those responsible for hiring staff, awarding degrees, prescribing texts, and so on. See N. 1 above.
32. For discussion of this issue see K. Harris, *op. cit.*, Chs. 1 and 2.
33. See again K. Harris, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-6; 69-74; 78-93; 140-1.

Source: K. Harris, 'Philosophers of education: detached spectators or political practitioners?', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1980 pp. 19–35.

2 Power, tradition and change: educational implications of the thought of Antonio Gramsci

George Mardle

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It might well be argued that the dominant traditions in both sociology and the sociology of education in this country remain heavily Americanized. We continue to be immune to many of the traditions of European thought, receiving them, if at all, through their American interpretations. [1] Consequently, many writers worthy of our attention, within the European tradition, tend to be neglected.

Such a writer, I want to suggest, is Antonio Gramsci. Although normally associated with social and political theorizing, it is my intention here to demonstrate that Gramsci has a considerable contribution to make to educational theory, providing many important insights into current areas of educational debate.

The importance of Gramsci as an educational theorizer can be located not only in his concern to understand the role of education in advanced capitalist societies but, more particularly, the way in which he was prepared (be it in the context of his own historical circumstances) to present a clear articulation of the possible contribution that education can make to an active theory of social change. It is an attempt to overcome in some way the naive spectrum of argument which fluctuates between those who argue about man's irrelevance in the face of historical forces, through the various shades of optimism espoused in reformism, towards those who argue change merely requires reorientation of man's essence towards taking control of that which, after all, is only his own construct.

It is this linking of theory and practice, looking towards education and the conditions of active social change, that develops from an understanding of Gramsci. However, whilst Gramsci concerns himself with the mechanisms of change, they are, true to his own interpretation of the dialectic of theory and practice, underpinned with important theoretical concerns. It is to offer a brief guide to this theory that I now turn, though for readers who are either unfamiliar with some of Gramsci's ideas or who require a more comprehensive analysis, an Appendix is presented at the end of this paper.

The central theoretical tenet of Gramsci's work, at least relevant to this paper, is that man has a total productive relationship with his physical and social world. It is, however, active rather than passive: whilst man cannot deny the historical circumstances within which he finds himself, his dialectical relationship with these forces is such that if he is ever to be an active proponent of change then he must engage with them. To dilute an important phrase of Marx, man should not just reflect on the world (in an act of philosophy) but must actively engage in changing it.

Man is not therefore merely a puppet, controlled by some naturalistic law, but an active thinking and doing agent. He must not only attempt to comprehend his own reality, but also transcend it.

It is within these mechanisms of change that Gramsci argues education has a role to play. For if man is totally productive then change will not be that which merely reflects the economic substructure, neither will it be some change of consciousness relating to the superstructural relationships. Rather it will be the grasping of control over these total productive forces. It will, therefore, within this totality be important to at least put man into the potential position of being able to control these productive forces.

Change is therefore more than economic change, it is also cultural and intellectual change. They, unless one adopts a purely deterministic stance, assume at least equal importance. For not only might the cultural and intellectual field provide a crucial cornerstone in activating change, it also provides the basis under which such changes can be sustained. This ability to stabilize change comes through in terms of Gramsci's idea of hegemony. Williams notes:

> By 'hegemony' Gramsci seems to mean a sociopolitical situation, in his terminology a 'moment', in which the philosophy and practice of a society fuse or are in equilibrium; an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations. [2]

This new, to Gramsci, superior cultural order, would not occur without a hard, difficult struggle – one which required individuals to both master the skills of intellectual production, and use them in engaging with the forces of history in active critical self-consciousness. It is at this point that education becomes the key in his theory of change. It is to this concern that I now move.

If one accepts Gramsci's basic thesis, therefore, that both historical and individual forces are important in the generation of change, then the education of this critical self, as an important element in the dialectics of change, becomes paramount. Yet, such intellectual capability will not simply arise like a phoenix from the proletarian ashes, it must be struggled for. Thus, Gramsci argues, simultaneous with the struggle on the economic front, there must be struggle on the cultural and educational fronts. However, such a struggle, as I will attempt to show later, may have more ideas in common with the reactionary right in Britain than with the so-called radical left.

As evident in his sociohistorical method, Gramsci was very much located in the historical forces of his day. His theoretical analysis of education therefore reflects an understanding of the contemporary educational system. Nevertheless, many of the intellectual ideas used as rationalizations for that system have, to say the least, some remarkable similarities with those which underpin our educational practice today.

In 1923, the Italian government, under Mussolini, instigated major reforms in the Italian educational system which owed their philosophical leanings to two idealist theorists: Giovanni Gentile and Benedetto Croce. The major attack was on Jesuit dominance in education which was seen to lay undue emphasis on such

areas as classical grammer, philosophy and heavy literary manuals. Gentile and Croce saw contemporary education as being overformalized, narrow in its conception, concerned more with instruction than with education and leading to a basic sterility of the mind. Their concern was that education should be an active process, developing freedom of expression, active exploration of the environment, the child's potential understanding of the world, and so on. [3] In fact their conception of education embraced the whole gambit of educational rationalizations arising from the work of many of the European educational romantics (particularly Rousseau) [4] and as with most idealistic conceptions of education, 'freedom' reflected only that which was compatible with the existing social and economic order. So that where the philosophers strove towards the higher ideals of education, the structure of the education system itself denied those very ideals because of its compatibility with the existing conditions of production. This contradiction led Gramsci to argue that:

> The tendency today is to abolish every type of schooling that is disinterested (not serving immediate interests) or 'formative', keeping at most only a small-scale version to serve a tiny elite of ladies and genetlemen who do not have to worry about assuring themselves of a future career. [5]

Functional schools, however, do not simply reproduce the conditions of the economic substructure. More importantly, by divorcing 'the formative' from education at a later stage, such schools actively reproduce a separate bureaucratic element drawn from the scholastically inclined. The latter become those 'cultural technocrats' [6] who are in turn the functionaries in control of the industrial infrastructure because of their position in the bureaucracy of industry. For it is these people who provide the 'scientific rationalizations' for the productive activity undertaken by the employees of industrial concerns. Moreover, such functionaries share common interests with those of the dominant political elite who provide a hegemony which becomes the central source of the ruling ideology. In effect it becomes 'one of the mechanisms by which the career bureaucracy eventually came to control the democratic regimes and parliaments' [7]

This relationship between the state and the economic function of the educational system whereby the existing division of labour in the productive forces is reproduced, cannot simply be overcome by replacing the content of education by another more in line with certain idealistic conceptions. In order to break down the dichotomy between intellectual and productive functions, it is required that education itself should guide people so that they may take control of the productive forces in both spheres. Furthermore, such education should not be imparted as a duality, but rather as dialectically related, so that those who receive it will possess 'that minimum of general technical culture which will permit (them), [8] if not to create autonomously the correct solution, at least to know how to adjudicate between the solutions put forward by the experts, and hence to choose the correct one from the 'synthetic' viewpoint of political technique'. [9]

Such rigour will not be achieved by ignoring the parameters which already designate the boundaries of much intellectual labour. Therefore, those educated toward such intellectual positions possess areas of knowledge, language and literary skills involving a whole host of intellectual structures, which enable them to critically articulate in the sphere of production. They possess, in other words,

the basis of what might be called 'intellectual discipline', as reflected in both their social position in the structure of society, and in the type of education they receive. [10]

For Gramsci, therefore, schooling must be based on a more theoretical understanding of the sociohistorical circumstances of education. So that, far from strengthening the existing hierarchies of relationships between the intellectual and productive spheres, it will provide the possible mechanisms whereby change might occur. From what principles, one might then ask, did Gramsci derive his educational philosophy?

Concerned as he was with the total productive mechanisms of society, Gramsci sought to reject the contemporary idealistic formulations of educational theory, and to return to some of the more traditional views of education which were at the time being rejected. This is not, however, to suggest that Gramsci's was simply a reactionary formulation. Indeed he was concerned rather to develop possibilities which would permit genuine as opposed to rhetorical changes. His concern therefore was to demonstrate how a return to traditionalism, [11] in terms of its theoretical underpinnings, would provide a context within which 'critical selfconsciousness' might be produced. Traditional education, as far as Gramsci was concerned, was that which began to reject the dominant world views which permeated a pre-educated society. [12] In other words, he saw such education as a means whereby world views based largely on religion and folklore might be reorientated. In effect, he saw such education as being concerned to impart 'a more modern outlook based essentially on an awareness of the simple and fundamental fact that there exist objective, intractable natural laws to which man must adapt himself if he is to master them in his turn'. [13]

This means that both the individual's control over and his relationship to the world are not seen as being dominated by some supernatural force, but rather as reflecting human creation. In other words, they are seen to reflect an underlying concern with the power of work as a means whereby man may come to know and transform the world. Hence Gramsci argues: 'The idea and the fact of work (of theoretical and practical activity) was the educational principle latent in the primary school, since it is by now means of work that the social and state order (rights and duties) is introduced and identified with the natural order'. [14]

Not that Gramsci accepts piecemeal that the content of such education always contains the possibility of transformation. On the contrary, he is careful to stress that it is the *latent* possibility that is important. Furthermore, in making such a statement he appears to acknowledge the fact that it is education, of the traditional form, which demonstrates that man regulates his existence in the realms of civil society. Moreover, he implies that if the given regularity of that order is ever to be overcome, then the simple negation of that reality, in the existential sense, is not enough. For, Gramsci argues, it is this ideational form which provides the intellectual truth, which in turn legitimates the social existence of the child in the given social order. Therefore simply to deny it reflects no more than an idealistic attempt to alter the consciousness of the individual without understanding the full dialectical relationship between social existence and essence.

What remains of utmost improtance in Gramsci's analysis, therefore, is that the school curriculum should not only provide the basis of knowing what is, but should also provide the means whereby such a reality may be transcended. It is

for this reason that he argues: 'The individual consciousness of the overwhelming majority of children reflects social and cultural relations which are different from and antagonistic to those which are represented in the school curricula: thus the "certain" of an advanced culture becomes "true" in the framework of a fossilized and anachronistic culture'. [15]

The ideational forms, therefore, through which the child recognizes the totality of society, may conflict with his conception of his own social existence outside the immediate educational establishment. Gramsci's point here is that education should accelerate those contradictions rather than deny them through immediate activity. Thus, claims to 'educativity' which deny the social situation of the the child and fail to relate to the realities of the civil society within which the child exists, become idealistically impotent: 'We will have rhetorical schools, quite unserious, because the material solidity of what is "certain" will be missing, and what is "true" will be truth only of words, that is to say precisely rhetoric'. [16]

This stress on the development of a traditional 'world view' as a central focus of Gramsci's analysis may of course be interpreted as a paradox in his argument. For, if the nature of things as they are [17] is to be made relevant to the child, and if facts are to be of paramount importance, how does this of itself provide any impetus for change? Since contradictions are not necessarily self-evident, attendance to facts may itself simply reinforce the form of those facts as prescribed.

An answer would seem to emerge from a consideration of Gramsci's wider aims. It has been suggested that he was concerned to create the possibility of a counter-hegemony which would arise from the proletariat through the creation of working class intellectuals. Further, he was concerned that socialism should not simply be based on change in the existing economic order, but rather that it should also arise from change in the 'ethico-political' consciousness. However, this creation of a counter-hegemony cannot simply entail a matter of argument between competing ideologies. [18] It will represent rather the development of a world view which can compete on an equal intellectual basis with that which already permeates the nature of civil society. Consequently, the question arises of where the power of this world view is to be found. To deny any dialectical relationship, and thereby to opt for a deterministic view of the economic substructure, provides a ready-made but inadequate answer. However, if one restores the dialectic, it necessarily follows that ideas have at least an equal power in the relationship. And it is this 'power' that Gramsci was concerned to grasp, since he conceived it as providing the basis from which that counter-hegemony would arise. But what was to be the role of traditional schools in this process?

The power to which Gramsci alludes is that of the ruling class in its effort to provide the intellectual rigour in order to develop and sustain coherent world views. Such power provides the basis upon which legitimate authority is maintained – not through coercive power, but through the rigorous application of the intellect to interpretations of political and civil society. In effect, such power provides the basis upon which the ruling class governs. If ever this hegemony is to be changed, Gramsci argues, then 'It must mean that every "citizen can govern" and that society places him, even if only abstractly, in a general condition to achieve this'. [19]

It follows, therefore, that the formative nature of the intellect, developed

through the 'hard graft' of disciplined study, becomes the focus of Gramsci's educational philosophy. What is required, then, is that children be instructed [20] in the often tedious rote learning of a whole intellectual tradition. For it is through such a process, Gramsci argues, that each child will be enabled to analyse and think on a par with those intellectual traditions which he must overcome in order to take up his proper place in civil and political society. Let us consider briefly a particular example – namely, Gramsci's concern to develop the study of Latin:

> It has been studied in order to accustom children to studying a specific manner, and to analysing a historical body which can be treated as a corpse which returns continually to life; in order to accustom them to reason, to think abstractly and schematically while remaining able to plunge back from abstraction into real and immediate life, to see in each fact or datum what is general and what is particular, to distinguish the concept from a specific instance. [21]

It is by using the cultural tradition as a basis for introducing the child to the historical tradition, Gramsci suggests, that he may become a part of that historical tradition. [22] The child is enabled therefore to achieve a historicist understanding which will allow him to actively enter the historical process at an intellectual level. To prohibit access to the intellectual order is to prescribe functional autonomy for the existing social and political hierarchy, and moreover to deny involvement in the critical dimensions of dialectical change.

This analysis, however, still fails to deal adequately with the nature of the mechanisms of change. For, if this traditional process of education, however powerful, promotes a traditional world view, how then is the latter ever to be overcome? In order to answer, we must consider Gramsci's philosophical explanation.

It has been suggested earlier that Gramsci saw all men as possessing intellectual capability. However, philosophizing as a traditional activity has been confined to an elite stratum of society. It has been this elite group which has traditionally sought after 'truth', providing world views and showing how the world has been diffused into the 'common sense' of the populous. So that, to the masses, philosophy as an activity can only be experienced as faith. [23] Consequently, the development of a critical philosophy remains at a primitive level of 'knowing'. In other words, it is perceived as acts of intuitions rather than as carefully developed rationalizations. More importantly, the contradictions that the individual experiences between the practical activity in which he is involved and his intellectual justifications for that activity remain totally polarized. The world that he knows, as a feature of existence, is divorced from the conception of that world imposed by those who provide the philosophies by which he lives.

Thus philosophy for Gramsci is the act of self-criticism. In other words, it is the ability to criticize the particular conceptions of the world held by the active human agent, rather than simply being an act of reflexive self-indulgence. Hence he argues:

> To criticize one's own conception of the world means therefore to make it a coherent unity and to raise it to a level reached by the most advanced thought in the world. It therefore also means criticism of all previous philosophy in so far as this has left stratified deposits in popular philosophy. The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one

> really is, and it is 'knowing thyself' [24] as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. [25]

The development of a critical philosophy for Gramsci, therefore, does not involve the negation of the historical development of philosophy but entails such a deep understanding of its history that a clear articulation of its contradictions, in terms of theory and practice, can be made. Critical philosophy, then, represents the ability of the masses to articulate a real world, and their ability to criticize the ideological forms through which they see that world. As Gramsci points out:

> For a mass of people to be led to think coherently and in the same coherent fashion about the real present world, it a 'philosophical' event far more important and 'original' than the discovery by some philosophical 'genius' of a truth which remains the property of small groups of intellectuals. [26]

It follows, therefore, in Gramsci's analysis, that the real mechanism of change involved the development of the intellectual rigour which will enable man to recognize not only the contradictions of the real world, not only the contradictions of the intellectual orders through which that real world is made manifest, but also the contradictions which exist between the two in terms of their dialectical relationship. In other words, it is the ability to take control over both processes simultaneously that is important. It is control achieved by actively entering into a relationship with the total, historical forces of production, rather than merely embarking on a rhetoric of negation which simply flirts with radicalism without any conception of the active mechanisms of change.

What specifically does this critical self-consciousness mean? In Gramsci's terms, it requires that the traditional curriculum provide both the historical forms of the various views, as well as the intellectual rigour through which such world views are manifested. Furthermore, this intellectual rigour represents the power for which the proletarian must struggle if they are to create a counter-hegemony. In effect, it represents the power to control one's intellectual development, as well as the power to control the specific productive forces of one's life world. Therefore, it is neither change in the curriculum, nor change in the activity of teaching itself, that will provide the basis for change in wider society, but rather change in the recipients of education as well as change in their ability to take control of wider social forces. It is for this reason that Gramsci argues: 'It was right to struggle against the old school, but reforming it was not so simple as it seemed. The problem was not one of model curricula but of men, and not just of the men who are actual teachers themselves but of the entire social complex which they express'. [27]

Because Gramsci was immersed in the problems of his own day, and because his major concern was to develop a strategy of action with definite and particular historical relationships, much of his work is addressed in the social structure and educational system of his own time and place. However, his insights into the Italian educational system of the early twentieth century remain relevant to our educational system today and make a considerable contribution to current educational debate, and most particularly to debate in the contemporary sociology of education. [28]

It could perhaps be argued that educationists today stand at the proverbial crossroads, in the sense that writers at both ends of the political spectrum seem caught in the grip of a passionate neurosis concerning the 'correctness' of their arguments. Two important aspects or such arguments spring immediately to mind: first, the way in which labels are attached indiscriminately to proponents of alternative views, and second, the way in which the validity of a particular view is maintained regardless of the type or form of evidence provided to dispute such a position. Consequently all those who support the equalizing of opportunity through comprehensivization or an abandonment of the traditional curriculum, are seen as radicals, while those who seek a return to selective processes of education or the development of a more traditional curriculum, are seen as reactionaries in the face of change. It is partly my intention here to demonstrate that such labelling suffers from a basic theoretical misconception, which is that of accepting that an end, and the means to that end, necessarily falls into a related set of distinct labels.

It cannot, however, be argued that theoretical developments in the sociology of education have altogether helped to articulate debate between rival ideologies. The hardened empiricism which arose in the 1950s persists today to explain once again the relationship between educational success and failure in terms of social class. Moreover, alternative developments in the so-called 'new directions', while providing valuable insights into the processes of education, remain relatively powerless in the face of wider structural and economic forces. However, while continuing to be divided on the delicate issue of the 'appropriate' methodological approach to the study of education, the two polarities remain tenuously linked in an implicit ideology. They are both concerned, to a greater or lesser degree, with the power of education to promote wider social change. It is not my concern here to analyse which theoretical stance has achieved greatest success in their implicitly shared aim, [29] but it is rather to argue that lack of investigation into the theoretical understandings of change has relegated the power of change through education to a mere epiphenomenon of its surrounding environment.

The tradition of empiricism, stemming from the work of Glass, has sought to reaffirm that social class and educational success are intrinsically related, and has always maintained that, given this undeniable fact, what is desired is that there should be an equalizing of educational opportunity so that the aims of a truly meritocratic society might be achieved. [30] Therefore those who are most disadvantaged in our society should be positively discriminated against in terms of additional resources so that they might be given a more equal chance of joining the education race. But where does this education race lead? Altering the balance in the relative chances of individuals to compete for the various 'goodies' provided by society may perhaps be defined as a change, but it remains far from radical. In terms of the actual quality of education provided, what does this equalizing of opportunity mean?

At the secondary level, it means a strong orientation to the ethos of comprehensive education which in 'theory' seeks to provide the mechanism of equality, which the pervasive tripartite system with its emphasis on the now or never eleven-plus, [31] failed to secure. Interestingly enough, however, when one begins to investigate the structure of comprehensive schools, the explicit functionality of the eleven-plus is seen to be replaced by an implicit, but little changed model, simply located within the confines of the one establishment.

Thus, in many ways the demands of the economic system, in particular that of the job market, remains the crucial variable around which such schools are organized. In line with this ethos, relevant curriculum is defined as that most 'suitable' for the particular child. So that those with academic orientations enter the GCE groupings, while those considered unsuited to such forms of study are allocated to the more practical vocationally orientated groupings. And the remainder, who are seen to have little or no ability, become involved in a series of nebulous activities designed to contain a hostile audience.

Consequently, the social class background of such groupings remains the paramount variable in deciding 'who gets what'. Within such a highly functional model, the social structure simply reproduces itself, and such mobility that does occur merely reflects the dominant ideology, which argues that since there is opportunity, you can make it if you try. What would appear to be lacking in such a system is any orientation towards what real change might mean. It is here that Gramsci's concerns, particularly in relation to the development of vocational schools, would seem to be relevant. In essence, it appears that Gramsci would not have been averse to comprehensive schools, [32] but that he would have been averse to much that passes for comprehensive education. Because by laying undue emphasis on the functional nature of schooling, heavily orientated towards selection into the correct positions in the division of labour, are we not denying access to the possibilities of change to those groups at the bottom of this hierarchical system? For we are prohibiting them access to the possible process whereby hegemony in the world of ideas might be achieved, in the sense that we are denying them access to anything which might be defined as a critical selfconsciousness of their own position.

It could be suggested that this argument might well be raised by those who desire the retention of grammar schools, as the centres wherein such academic learning, open to all social groupings, takes place. However, such an argument would completely misinterpret Gramsci's point. For such rigours of intellectual application should not simply be open to the select few – to those who fulfil the narrow criteria we use to measure intellectual ability – but rather they should be provided for all.

An important question to raise here concerns what the nature of this attempt to develop a critical consciousness might look like. In order to answer this, it is necessary to consider some aspects of the theoretical implications raised in recent developments in the sociology of education.

Important developments in the sociology of education at the beginning of the 1970s [33] sought to move away from the macroperspective and its concern with social class, and to focus on the processes which take place in educational institutions. Deriving its intellectual roots from many sources it concentrated on formulating an understanding of those processes through what might loosely be called a sociology of knowledge framework. However, as with the more predominantly functional paradigm, the focus of analysis was still educational performance. But the emphasis was now directed towards explaining school success or failure as a feature of the particular knowledge framework through which children were processed in the school situation, rather than as ascribed or intrinsic qualities of the individual child.

This concern with knowledge, therefore, meant that the curriculum now became an important focus of attention for sociologists since it was seen to be

decisive in its selective effects, particularly in comprehensive schools. However, this concern to treat the nature of the curriculum as problematic, thereby locating knowledge as something actively created between a subjective self and his social environment, served to reinforce a trend which had been developing particularly in primary education – namely, child-centred education. To quote a recent critical analysis of this movement by Sharp and Green, it is suggested that child-centred education rests on the belief that: 'The child should be allowed to develop his own inner potential rather than have ideas and techniques from the 'adult world imposed upon him'. In consequence of this, 'The curriculum is thus based on problem-solving rather than subject areas'. [34] Consequently, under such an assumption, the degree to which a child can or cannot know anything is minimized, and aspects of failure or success are relativized, since the world is no longer that terrible place it used to be when facts had to be learnt.

The crucial criticism of this particular position is of course that it has an underdeveloped theory of social structure, so that the so-called freedom of the individual only exists within the confines of a given social order. It fails to consider that at some stage the child will have to compete, will have to assimilate facts, and, more importantly, will have to succeed in order to survive. What is perhaps of utmost importance here is that the children best equipped to survive in such a system are those of the middle classes who possess the cultural capital [35] upon which to fall back. [36]

However, an important question to ask of such a position, often neglected, is why children encouraged to develop their 'true' potential, are discriminated against in wider structural terms. Are they not more rounded citizens than those brought up in a 'subject' orientated curriculum? Or, more importantly, are they not more open to the possibilities of changing the world in which they live? The answer here will depend on the assumptions one makes about the social structure and the subsequent conceptions one has concerning the nature of knowledge.

Such questions lead me to return to some considerations of Gramsci's analysis. Clearly, in structural terms, if one is concerned to develop in children their 'individual' potential as an overriding ideal, then one is in danger of falling into the idealist trap which perceives individual consciousness as the prime mover in the area of change. Such an orientation involves a notion of freedom in terms of the psychological propensity to be happy in 'doing' whatever one feels most happy doing. In other words, freedom is doing one's own thing and not someone else's. Yet is this freedom offering the child any more than a passing respite from the social relations of production into which he will have to enter, having left the protection of the school environment? Does the child receive any more from such an education than a prescription to initiate exploration into various areas of knowledge, since that prescription would seem to offer no possibility of actively engaging in the change of those knowledge areas?

If the recipients of education are to develop an orientation towards the social structure, which is neither passive in its acceptance nor idealistic in its formulation, then surely they must be given the tools through which such activity might be enacted. Just as the production worker requires tools in order to produce, so does the intellectual worker. To deny individuals access to these tools, no matter what ideal one seeks to fulfil, is to develop just as insiduous a model of capitalist production as that of the purely economic field.

Rather than moving away from the cultural traditions in which our thoughts have developed, might it not be more in keeping with the ideas of radicalism to become more vigorous in our teaching of those subjects? Might it not be argued that the breaking down of barriers through interdisciplinary inquiry serves ultimately to synthesize bounded areas of knowledge in the wider social structure into a new artificial orthodoxy? Surely the beginnings of any real synthesis must occur where those actually receiving such knowledge begin to make links rather than where only one organizing stratum of society does so. To deny this is to admit that much of what passes for education today represents mere rhetoric [37] subject to the fads of passing educational theorists.

Gramsci would undoubtedly be the first to agree that active and more rigorous engagement with one's culture would not be sufficient to provide the basis for change. Indeed, this would only provide the tools for achieving critical self-consciousness. What is required in addition is that the individual in relationship with others should become critically aware of the civil society in which he lives. If man is ever to achieve the unity of theory and practice, he must become critically absorbed in both the economic and ideological structures in which he exists. Thus education is not merely instruction into the public modes of discourse, albeit a necessary starting point, but also an attempt to provide critical discourse on such areas. Such discourse being the basis for the development of a possible, real alternative hegemony, rather than one which may simply become oppositional within the confines of the existing social structue. [38]

We may say therefore that, in developing some conception of the mechanisms of change, Gramsci raises the important questions for current educational theorizing. He suggests that the usual distinctions between right and left on the political spectrum may not be as stereotyped as we have hitherto imagined. The search by the left for equality, underpinned by liberal ideologies of freedom, may simply reflect a tampering process with the consumptive rather than productive mechanisms of society. Alternatively, the reactive forces of the right in their fight for a return to the traditional methods of education, may be providing the seeds of a more radical possibility in education than has ever been offered before. It would be too simplistic, however, to perceive aims and strategies as being inverted between left and right, but what is suggested is that many writers have substituted blind truth for any attempt at theoretical rigour within their expositions.

Gramsci, I therefore argue, must figure prominently in any serious consideration of change. For change is not simply the negation of all that has gone before, nor is it merely the necessary result of underlying structural conditions. It is rather the total dialectic within which man is both the subject and object of history. To those who value the possibility that man may enter that process and who perceive education as being of importance in that undertaking, I recommend careful consideration of Gramsci's educational thinking.

APPENDIX

Gramsci and Marxism

Gramsci, born in 1891 of petty bourgeois parents on the island of Sardinia, remained an enigma for most of his life. A man of outstanding intellectual capacities, yet one who chose to remain close to the agricultural or factory worker, Gramsci was concerned to develop a highly rigorous theoretical under-

standing of the capitalist system without neglecting the human and subjective components of change. Thus Gramsci maintains that it is not only the historical forces which Marxist intellectuals need to articulate, but also the human components through which any strategy of change may be enacted. Merrington draws our attention to this distinguishing feature of Gramsci's work when he writes that:

> Gramsci's work represents above all a model of that type of critical development as opposed to blind exegesis of Marxism, which 'actualizes' theory in relation to each specific conjecture, locating the changing centres of contradiction in the capitalist world and elaborating the appropriate strategy. [39]

Following this, we may echo a well-known quotation from Marx which states that whilst men do not make history in circumstances of their own choosing, they *do* make history. However, while denying the fatalism and determinism so prevalent in the economism of much Marxist theory, Gramsci avoids the voluntarism and individualism which pervade most alternative theories of change. In other words, he does not simply provide an objective theory of contradictions within the capitalist world, but articulates within that same theory mechanisms whereby such contradictions may be overcome. It is perhaps for this reason that Vajda writes: 'His Marxism, his Marxist philosophy, is an original interpretation of Marx which differs from all previous conceptions'. [40] What then is this interpretation, and how does Gramsci arrive at it? Intellectually, Gramsci drew on many sources before developing his particular brand of Marxism. [41] But his utilization of these diverse sources would appear to be directed towards one overwhelming problem, namely the critical development of a 'philosophy of *praxis*'. Hence he argues in *The Prison Notebooks*: 'The philosophy of *praxis* is sufficient unto itself, that it contains in itself all the fundamental demands needed to construct a total and integral conception of the world'. [42]

Gramsci's interest in the philosophy of *praxis* was first aroused during his formative years at the University of Turin where, in the lectures of Annibole Pastore, he was introduced to the Hegelian 'idealistic' aspects of Marxism. This introduction stirred in Gramsci the unique nexus of Marxist philosophy which structures the traditional philosophical duality of theoretical and practical activities into a coherent dialectical relationship. The latter, Gramsci argues, enables one both to move away from the purely idealistic elements of Marxism, while rejecting the kinds of materialist orthodoxy and metaphysical interpretations which were beginning to dominate Marxist analysis. [43]

The essence of this dialectic is that man is both *'homo faber'* and *'homo sapiens'*, [44] and as such he 'participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it – that is, to bring into being new modes of thought'. [45]

Therefore, man, to echo Marx once again, is *totally* productive. [46] Yet in man's commonsense world the duality of thinking and doing are paramount. The historical tenets of philosophy which create such a duality are also reflected in commonsense thinking and in the divisions of manual and intellectual labour. The problem is that if ever the true moment of revolution is to be achieved, man must take control of his total and productive forces, such that there will be a

unity between theory and practice. Thus not only need the social forces of history be confronted, but also the ideologies that support those social forces.

Clearly, at this point, Gramsci may be attacked for his idealism concerning the nature of the social forces of history. Indeed this realism can only be justified if the analysis remains at the subjective level of change. But the strength of Gramsci's argument resides in the fact that, true to his own philosophical roots, he seeks to formulate a theoretically rigorous analysis of the capitalist system which will at the same time provide a basis upon which struggle for change may be understood and acted upon. In other words, the philosophy of *praxis* is placed into a framework of analysis through which the unity of man as both theoretician and activist may be understood. In rejecting the economism of much orthodox Marxist theory, Gramsci located one of the most fundamental problematics of analysis – that is, the question of the relationship between substructure and superstructure in capitalist society. In the most deterministic analysis, the superstructure is seen as merely holding the status of an idealistic essence, emanating from the economic substructure. Substructure and superstructure might be conceived as being dialectically related, and thus change becomes more than simply change in the substructure. Such a conception embraces the consideration of both how the superstructure will be affected by, and how it will itself affect, substructural change. For, it is through the superstructure, Gramsci argues, that men acquire consciousness of their social position in the forces of production. It is through the superstructure that legitimate authority over the productive forces is maintained, and therefore through the superstructure that the propulsive forces of change will be made manifest, rather than merely remaining latent.

It follows, therefore, that the supremacy of one social group over another in capitalist society is not merely maintained by the coercive power of the state which shapes the popular mass to the dominant economic form of the moment, but also through the active consent of the masses to that power. Thus hegemony is achieved by both directly political, and indirectly civil acceptance of that social dominance. [47]

It is through civil authorities and private organizations such as the media, the church and schools that a 'world view' is created which provides the legitimate authority whereby the state achieves the active consent of the governed in the formation of an integrated society. The point here being, that this world view represents the commonsense understanding that the masses have of the nature of reality. However, unless one is to accept the dichotomy between thought and action, this conscious understanding of reality is one which remains divorced from the theory and practice of the individual concerned. So that the intellectual capability of man, dialectically related to his actions to transform a real world, remains divorced from the intellectual rationalizations which he has absorbed from the mechanisms of civil society. As Gramsci seeks to explain:

> One might almost say that he (man) has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. [48]

Thus, it is only through achieving a stage of critical self-consciousness that man is enabled to unite his theoretical and practical activities into one single and

coherent world view. Yet where is this critical self-consciousness to come from? In order to understand, one must consider the crucial role assigned to intellectuals in Gramsci's analysis.

As has already been suggested, all men have intellectual capacity and 'philosophize', but not all men are intellectuals or philosophers. Traditionally, the role of the intellectual or thinker is divorced from and remains relatively autonomous of wider social relationships in society. This separation is supported by the relatively uninterrupted historical continuity that such a grouping has maintained. Such an analysis conceives of intellectuals as an autonomous social group, independent of the social forces of history, and therefore logically independent of what Gramsci admits in the last instance [49] is the major determinant of society – namely, the economic form of production. Through Gramsci, one is introduced to a different conception of 'intellectuals'. The essence of his argument runs briefly as follows:

> Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. [50]

Hence it follows that, in the Marxist sense, intellectuals are the functionaries of the superstructure in the sense that they legitimate, through the agencies already mentioned, the historically generated forces of production. Therefore, they are not independent of those forces, but rather dialectically related to them since they provide the intellectual and moral direction for the majority of the masses. Thus for Gramsci, if the domination of this intellectual stranglehold is to be broken, if theory and practice is to become a reality for all men, then a counter-hegemony must be created. No longer may culture or philosophical analysis be the prerogative of an elite working in relationship with the dominant mode of production, but rather a new integrated culture must emerge, which will reflect the unity of the total theoretical and practical activities of *all men.*

How is this new ethicopolitical order to be achieved? Gramsci believed that it would occur through the development of a group of intellectuals arising out of the working class. Here Gramsci deviated from Marx in the sense that Marx envisaged the formation of such a group as coming from the detachment in its traditional allegiance with the bourgeoisie, and its subsequent provision of some intellectual rigour to the struggle of the proletariat. Gramsci, on the other hand, argues that the theoretical development of such a group and its intellectual rigour will be dialectically related to its objective position in the class struggle, and hence to a definitive and historically related set of social relationships. It is also important to note that the conception Gramsci has of these intellectuals is not simply one of consciousness-raisers, since such an interpretation falls into the trap of idealism. As Williams points out:

> This process of integration (by the intellectuals) is not restricted to the normal Marxist categories. It is not merely a matter of generating a socially effective class-consciousness. That is the function of 'ideology', a lower form of intellectual activity whose relationship to philosophy, according to Gramsci, is analogous to that of the Catholicism of the masses to the Catholicism of the church intelligentsia. [51]

Gramsci's vision of socialism therefore reflects not only an alternative in the economic forms of society, but also a counter-intellectual hegemony which will fight capitalism in the moral and ethical field, thus providing a renaissance in the total productive capacity of man. [52]

At this stage, two important considerations emerge from Gramsci's analysis which relate both to education and to his interpretation of Marxism.

First, that intellectualism, as conceived by Gramsci, is a highly rigorous activity. Counterposing an alternative hegemony, and thereby creating an embryonic force which will take possession of the productive forces, cannot be achieved by simply counterposing ideas. Such ideas must be vigorously developed. To simply challenge the dominant ideas at the level of content neglects consideration of the structures through which that content is presented. Radicalism therefore is not something anarchistic or ritualistic; it involves rather the challenging of ruling ideas on an equal, if not superior, intellectual basis.

Second, Gramsci's analysis provides an interesting consideration of the nature of intellectual freedom. In treating seriously the dialectical relationship between consciousness and the social relations of production, he admits to the possibility of ideas developed by individuals, as having some power in the moments of change. Active, critical philosophy becomes therefore the prerogative of all men who reflect on their personal positions in the historical process. Such reflection is perceived not simply as an epiphenomenon of wider economic and structural change, but rather as actively leading and providing a cornerstone from which a new form of social order may arise. It is for this reason that Gramsci suggests: 'It seems necessary that the hard work of research into new truths and into better, more coherent, and clearer formulations of the truths themselves should be left to the free initiative of individual scholars, even if the very principles which seem most essential are continually put to the question'. [53]

Clearly, one cannot do sufficient justice here to Gramsci's interpretation of Marxism. Nevertheless, I have attempted to give some indication of his basic concerns, and one which locates the important theoretical framework within which to understand the role of education in the dialectics of change.

Notes

1 i.e. functionalism, phenomenology, etc.

2 G. Williams, 'The Concept of "Egomania" in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes of Interpretation', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 21 (1960).

3 It is perhaps useful to note how such expressions of the nature of education retain a remarkable similarity in their rhetoric to some of the educational writings of the past decade.

4 Rousseau – not that Gramsci was completely against these progressive ideas, but, as he argues, 'The active school is still in its romantic phase in which the element of struggle against the mechanical and Jesuitical school has become unhealthily exaggerated' *(Prison Notebooks*, see note 5 below).

5 All subsequent references to the *Prison Notebooks* will be taken from Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (eds.), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London, Laurence & Wishart, 1971).

6 My interpretation - Gramsci uses the term 'technical and cultural activity'.

7 *Prison Notebooks.*

8 In the quote I use, Gramsci uses the singular term 'him'.

9 *Prison Notebooks.*

10 Gramsci reflects that in the intellectual strata children 'breathe in', as the expression goes, a whole quantity of notions and attitudes which facilitate the educational process properly speaking. This reflects very much the arguments Bourdieu relates to in his notions of 'cultural capital'; P. Bourdieu, 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction', in R. Brown (ed.), *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change* (London, Tavistock, 1973).

11 Gramsci uses traditionalism in a specific context, which he used to circumvent the prison censors. It represented to him the 'ideal' system as a criticism of the 'present'. He did not accept a piecemeal return to such a system, but the use of its structural strength in providing the development of a hegenomy.

12 By this I mean a society in which specific forms of institutions to educate people did not exist.

13 *Prison Notebooks.*

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Or the ideological forms of how they are seen to be?

18 Something Gramsci considered to be a lower order activity; see Williams, op. cit.

19 *Prison Notebooks.*

20 He draws a specific relationship between 'instruction' as a way of instilling facts into the mind, and 'education' which he argues comes through this. This is somewhat different from the dichotomy normally made which argues that instruction is not necessarily the same as education.

21 He relates this more concretely when he argues what after all is the educational significance of the constant comparison between Latin and the language one speaks? It involves the distinction and the identification of words and concepts, suggests the whole of formal logic, from the contradiction between opposites to the analysis of distincts'. (*Prison Notebooks*)

22 Historicism was an important intellectual strand throughout Gramsci's developing philosophy.

23 For the ability to apply philosophical analysis rigorously to one's own position is hampered by the inability often to intellectualize these arguments.

24 A reference to the inscription written above the gate of the Oracle at Delphi.

25 *Prison Notebooks*

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 As Hoare and Nowell-Smith point out, 'Gramsci's preoccupations in his writing on education are still at the centre of educational debate today; the relations between education and class; vocationalism; the ideology of education; the 'comprehensive' school'. (*Prison Notebooks*)

29 Though it may be interesting to speculate that the so-called more conservative empiricism may have produced more genuine structural changes in our education system than any developments from the so called 'new directions'.

30 D. Glass, *Social Mobility in Britain* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954).

31 Placing people in the right school according to both their 'innate' abilities, and the demands of the economic system.

32 He talks of a new type of formative school (primary secondary) which would take the child up to the threshold of job choice (*Prison Notebooks*).

33 Of which I think the most important was M. F. D. Young's *Knowledge and Control* (London, Collier-Macmillan, 1971).

34 R. Sharp and A. Green, *Education and Social Control* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

35 A term borrowed from Bourdieu, op. cit. (note 10).

36 This is pointed out also by Sharp and Green, op. cit., and Bernstein in another context; B. Bernstein, *Class Codes and Control*, vol. 3 (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

37 For Gramsci's use of the term rhetoric see previous quote from *Prison Notebooks* (note 16).

38 R. Williams, *Base and Superstructure* (London, New Left Review, 1974).

39 J. Merrington, *Theory and Practice in Gramsci's Marxism* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

40 M. Vajda, 'Review of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*', *Telos*, vol. 15 (1973).

41 Beside Marx, I think that Kant, Hegel, Croce and Gentile can be seen as the most important.

42 *Prison Notebooks*.

43 i.e. The idealism of Croce, the materialist interpretations of Plekhanov and Bukharin, and the neo-Kantian deviations of Adler and Hilferding.

44 Man the maker and Man the thinker.

45 *Prison Notebooks*.

46 A reference to this important strand of Marx's argument which is developed in his 'Grundrisse', Introduction to *Critique of* Political Economy (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973).

47 Gramsci views the superstructure in two great 'floors' of political or coercive power and civil or consensual power.

48 *Prison Notebooks*.

49 In this he echoes Engels's rejoinder that in the *last* analysis it is the economy which is the determining force.

50 Gramsci actually points to two types of intellectual at this stage: those directly related to the current stage in the productive process, and those who have persisted in time through having developed from a previous economic formation (i.e. ecclesiastics). *Prison Notebooks*.

51 G. Williams, op. cit.

52 One may, I think, reflect on the works of Mao Tse-tung in this area.

53 Quoted by G. Williams, op. cit.

Source: G. Mardle, 'Power, tradition and change: educational implications of the thought of Antonio Gramsci', in D. Gleeson (ed.), *Identity and Structure: Issues in the Sociology of Education*, Nafferton Books, Driffield, England, 1977.

Piaget, Marx, and the political ideology of schooling

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B. A. Kaufman

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Introduction

Piaget's writings have in recent years provided a vast reservoir of useful and interesting ideas related to the process of education. Psychologists[1], curriculum specialists[2,3,4] and teacher educators[5,6] have indicated how Piaget's cognitive-developmental psychology could be applied to various issues related to the practice of education. In previous papers[7,8], it was argued that any application of Piaget's theory within a pedagogical context must reflect an epistemological foundation; to do otherwise is to limit the revolutionary nature of Piaget and thereby result in gross misinterpretations and misapplications.

It is the position of this paper that the Piagetian psychology of constructivism is mutally exclusive to the presuppositions of scientific materialism which form the foundations of contemporary behavioural psychology and monopoly capitalism. Any educational implications of Piaget's developmental theory would have to be examined in light of the overriding function of schooling in America which essentially serves to support and promulgate the political ideology of capitalism through the psychology of behaviourism. It will be argued that the political ideology of schooling in the Anglo-Saxon culture is consistent with the theoretical foundations of modern monopoly capitalism. Capitalism and behaviourism, as theoretical disciplines, share a common materialist world view. The 'language' and 'science' of behaviourism is also the 'language' and 'science' of capitalism.

Because the Piagetian psychology of constructivism is derived from a dialectical interdependence of the organism and the environment, it presupposes an image of mankind and the nature of knowledge that is mutually exclusive to the capitalist ideology. Therefore, any attempt to apply Piaget's constructivism within a pedagogical context that is founded on the ideology of capitalism is, in effect, an impossibility.

Reese and Overton have argued that a theory of psychology presupposes a more general metaphysical or epistemological model.[9] These models are represented as paradigms or world views. Theories derived from different models are independent and therefore mutually exclusive. Different world views involve different conceptualizations about the nature and acquisition of knowledge. Any attempt at synthesis is impossible and, at best, confusing.

Riegel has traced the influence of capitalist and socialist ideologies on the evolution of developmental psychology.[10] He sees the capitalist orientation as a model of continuous growth in which individuals are evaluated against single

standards and which thereby implies a form of stratification. Socialism, on the other hand, emphasizes qualitative growth that encourages uniqueness and multidimensional standards. The dialectical nature of Piaget's constructivism shares a common epistemological foundation with the ideology of socialism and therefore any educational applications of Piaget in a pedagogical context must be viewed within a congruent political and economic system.

Although Kohlberg and Mayer provide a strong argument relative to the ethical value positions underlying educational ideologies, their call for development as an aim of education is made without reference to the political realities inherent in the capitalist and behaviourist ideology that forms the theoretical foundations of contemporary educational practice. Kohlberg and Mayer indicate that 'the developmental conception remains the only rationale for solving these (i.e. educational) injustices, and for providing the basis for a truly democratic educational process'.[11] (p. 494). However, Kohlberg and Mayer fail to realize that the practice of schooling within a capitalist ideology is not to promulgate democracy as an ideal, but rather is a means to provide a mechanism for social control in the interest of maintaining a rigid class structure that is essential for a capitalist society.

The present paper examines the fundamental issues related to basic epistemological models that are categorically incompatible, and how this incompatibility is maintained downward through the theoretical disciplines of political economy and psychology. This categorical determinism based on epistemological presuppositions does not end at the level of the theoretical disciplines. It extends further to lower order, specific applications of a given theory termed practice. Theories built upon different epistemological models are unique and independent; any application or practice that emanates from such theories are also mutually exclusive.

It will be argued that the materialist conception of the universe forms the overriding model from whence emanate the theories related to behavioural psychology and capitalism. Educational practice based on such a foundation forms a pedagogy that must include class stratification in the form of tracking, normative psychometric measures of achievement, and an unequal process of education that maintains class inequalities. It will further be shown that the developmental psychology of Piaget has as its presuppositions a dialectical conception that is more consistent with a socialist ideology. Educational practice based on this foundation forms a pedagogy that includes a holistic and dialectical model of development rather than a reductionist and mechanistic view, qualitative measures of cognitive competence rather than quantitative measures of cognitive performance, and a model of discontinuous growth that is evaluated in terms of the collective needs of the society rather than a model of continuous growth where children are evaluated against single standards that reflect a rigid class structure.

Models, materialist and dialectical

According to C. Wright Mills 'a model is a more or less systematic inventory of the elements to which we must pay attention if we are to understand something. It is not true or false; it is useful and adequate to varying degrees'.[12] (p. 36). A model is comprehensive and encompasses all aspects of the human condition. Models contain theories of mankind, society, and history. They contain assumptions about how a society is made up and how it works. They also suggest the methods of study appropriate to their theories. From these theories and with these methods, practical applications are derived. In summary, a model provides the machinery for thinking about humankind, society, and history.

A model is capable of encompassing every human activity. Models define the essential characteristics of man and the nature of reality. Reese and Overton indicate that models serve three major functions.[9] First, models represent elements and their relations. For example, a model of society would include a representation of the relationship of various elements that constitute a society, such as government, schools, and the means of production. Second, models serve as organizing principles or paradigms that explicate specific aspects of theories.[13] An example of such a function can be seen in Piaget's biological model of knowledge that generates a psychological theory based on environmental interaction.[14] Third, models serve to define meaningful problems, a science to investigate these problems, and the interpretation of how the solutions of these problems could be put into practice for the betterment of mankind.

Traditionally, three general models have been advanced in Western philosophical thought. These are idealism, materialism, and dialecticism. For the purpose of this paper, the idealist model will not be discussed. The primary reason being that specific forms of theory and practice related to the idealist model are not widely found in contemporary Western society in the form of political ideologies or educational practice. The interested reader should consult Kohlberg and Mayer for a discussion of the idealist model in educational practice.[11] It should also be noted that the following discussion of materialism and dialecticism will not attempt to provide detailed statements relative to specific philosophies associated with a given model, but general descriptions of the model in question.

It is difficult to isolate an exact point in history where the materialist model had its origins. However, philosophical tradition usually traces its origin to the seventeenth-century philosopher Descartes. To provide an epistemological rationale for the scientific revolution of Galileo and his work related to moving bodies, Descartes posited a model of man consisting of mind and body. According to Ryle the mind was to Descartes a ghost in a machine.[15] The ghost is made up of incorporeal thinking substance, and only outer manifestations of the body and its movements can be observed. The relationship of mind to body is purely caused in nature. All human actions within the Cartesian dualism of mind and body are mechanistic and are caused by a continuous chain of physical processes.

The metaphor of the machine as a characteristic of the materialistic model was explicitly stated in the work of Hobbes, a contemporary of Galileo and Descartes. Mischel describes Hobbes' conception of human beings as material

systems where the heart is a spring, nerves are strings, and joints are wheels.[16] For Hobbes, the laws that governed physical bodies also governed human actions.

Locke is among the most significant figures found in the materialist tradition. His philosophical writings span the entire range of human interests. If one has to find a creed or manifesto related to the materialist model, it could be found in Locke's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* written in 1690. The now famous doctrine of the mind as a *tabula rasa* is found in this work. Locke summarizes the materialist position by stating:

> Let us suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas: —how comes it to be furnished? . . . To this I answer, in one word, from EXPERIENCE.[17] (pp. 313-314).

With the onset of Newtonian mechanics in the eighteenth century, the materialist model of man as a machine is to be found in the work of Hume. Hume adopts the Newtonian method in philosophy to provide a mechanical orientation to mind. Mischel states "Thinking becomes, not something we do, but the occurrence of mental images whose appearance and disappearance is explained by the 'forces' of association.'[16] (p. 13). Following the tradition of Locke, Hume posits that since thought is invisible one must only focus on the external world as a cause of these thoughts. For Hume and other materialists, human behaviour is caused by an external agent. Causal analysis led to a deterministic orientation in the empiricist model. Such an orientation implies an unidirectional process of cause and effect.

> As a cosmology, the model represents the universe as a machine, composed of discrete pieces operating in a spatio-temporal field. The pieces—elementary particles in motion—and their relations form the basic reality to which all other more complex phenomena are ultimately reducible. In the operation of the machine, forces are applied and there results a discrete chain-like sequence of events . . . Given this, it is only a short step to the recognition that complete prediction is in principle possible, since complete knowledge of the state of the machine at one point in time allows inference of the state of the next, given a knowledge of the forces to be applied. A further characteristic of the machine, and consequently of the universe represented in this way, is that it is eminently susceptible to quantification. Functional equations may be constructed that exhibit the relationship between the pieces in their operation.[9] (p. 131).

The general characteristics of the materialist model can be summarized as follows:

1. Reality is the sum total of all events and things that are quantitatively measurable.
2. The universe and all elements contained therein is machine-like and therefore one can explain everything about it by the laws of science or physical principles.
3. Mechanical law implies that events occur because they are acted upon by mechanical causes, and that whenever these causes are

the same, the effects are the same.

4. Each event in the universe is an instance of a definite causal pattern or law.
5. The number of laws in the universe is forever fixed and limited, and therefore once these laws are understood it is possible to predict all events.
6. All phenomena (psychological, sociological and historical) can be reduced to basic physical laws.

The following description of the dialectical model is not intended to be a comprehensive philosophical history but, rather, a general description of the characteristics found in a dialectical view of mankind. No attempt will be made to examine the specific philosophical movements of spiritual atomism, absolutism, pragmatism, or phenomenology as contributors to the general dialectical model.

The single most important characteristic that distinguishes the dialectical model from the materialist model is that the essence of reality is human action rather than mechanistic reaction. The dialectical model rejects that a dualism exists between mind and body or subject and object. Knowledge of reality is neither a result of inner experience or outer sensory recordings, but a dynamic relationship of an active organism and an active environment.

Because the general dialectical model is not easily traced, the following description will focus only on those luminaries in the history of ideas that have addressed themselves to the nature of mind and human action as a theory of knowledge. As a point of departure, it will be useful to examine the epistemological foundations of Hegel. It is beyond the scope of this paper to review in detail all of Hegel's philosophy. However certain salient features will be identified for the general purpose of providing the basic foundation of the dialectical model.

For Hegel, the truth of reality is reached by a process or method termed the dialectic. Hegel held that, upon careful examination of any doctrine, it could be shown to be self-contradictory by positing an opposed doctrine. This represents the famous Hegelian notion of the thesis and antithesis. The truth lies in the synthesis of the two that unites both doctrines at a higher plane. The resultant synthesis doctrine known as the Triad becomes the new thesis. Upon analysis, the Triad becomes inadequate and thereby reveals its new antithesis. When the new thesis and its antithesis are united, the new synthesis is more comprehensive and embodies more truth than any of the original doctrines. This process continues indefinitely. According to Hegel, the mind is driven forward by the movement of its own thought to even wider and more comprehensive formulations of truth. We shall return to this dialectical method of reaching truth in the section on Piaget's constructivism.

A second significant aspect of Hegel's philosophy is his conception of the relationship of whole and parts. It is in the area of parts whole relationships, that Hegel assails the methodology of scientific materialism and its mechanistic cosmology. For Hegel, no single element in the universe can be understood when it is divorced from the context of the whole in which it appears. Rather

than use the reductionist approach advocated by materialist science, dialectical science must use the dialectical method of opposed doctrines to arrive at meaningful truth. Ultimate reality is found in the whole, which contains all other wholes as its parts. Although the knowing subject and known objects appear as two separate things, they are brought together by the knowing act. Hegel held that the knowing mind and the known object constitute a whole or unity. The totality of this relationship consists of the subject, the object, and the knowing act. The whole of knowledge is real and exists; minds and objects are merely elements in this whole and if we regard these as existing separately, as in the case of materialist science, it will give rise to false abstractions of truth.

Another school of philosophy to be considered in this description of the dialectical model will be that of pragmatism. Rather than expand on the specific contributions of Peirce, James, or Dewey, a general description of pragmatism will be presented. The description will focus on those characteristics of pragmatism related to the general aspects of the dialectical model.

Pragmatism was the first modern philosophical movement to look to biology rather than physics or mathematics as a source of inspiration. Darwin's evolutionary theory of natural selection provided for pragmatist philosophers a new orientation about the nature of change that was traditionally found in Newtonian mechanics or in the analytic logic of mathematics.

The distinctive feature of pragmatism is its concept of truth, a concept which identifies truth with utility or usefulness. Pragmatism holds that knowledge is true if it 'works'. An idea or hypothesis 'agrees' with reality in the sense that it is a successful solution of a problem.

In analysing experience the mind is active. The mind not only discriminates but selects and adds to the perception of truth in accordance with the interests and purposes of the individual. Truth emerges from the critical utilization of the best method one can develop. What is real or true consists of a reality which man has constructed because it is precisely that kind of reality which best serves one's purpose. Truth, therefore, is a value. Since all experience is finite, no belief can be said to be absolutely true.

Pragmatism holds that the so-called laws of science are to be regarded as tentative truths or hypotheses. Truth is a hypothesis constructed by man and a product of free choice and modifiable by free will. If the modified truth or hypothesis produces satisfactory consequences, the newly constructed hypothesis is 'truer' than the original hypothesis. Reality is continually being made. Pragmatism asserts that values such as right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, reality and unreality, are not external facts, but the products of human action.

The general characteristics of the dialectical model can be summarized as follows:

1. Reality is qualitatively greater than the sum of all individual elements or experiences that are quantitatively measurable.

2. The laws of nature are constructed as a product of a dialectical interdependence of subjects and objects.

3. Scientific laws are neither finally nor absolutely true.

4. The future is unknown and therefore we cannot tell that a scientific law, however well it worked in the past, will necessarily hold for the future.
5. All phenomena (psychological, sociological, and historical) are more than the isolated facts or elements that they contain; they are wholes that transcend them.
6. Truth is a value that represents an expedient way of thinking about reality.

The nature of theories

Theories are categorically subsumed under models. As opposed to a model, a theory is a statement which can be proved true or false about the relationship of the elements in a model. A theory is by nature incomplete and encompasses isolated aspects of the human condition.

As Reese and Overton indicate, theories generated from the same model represent a family of theories although they may not necessarily be concerned with the same content.[9] Theories based on a common model share a common language. Examples of psychological families of theories are represented in the behaviourist 'schools' of contiguity theorists (Guthrie and Bandura) and reinforcement theorists (Hull, Spence, and Skinner). Controversies about theories within the same family do not involve epistemological issues; only empirical issues. Theories generated from different models are categorically mutually exclusive.

It will be argued here that theories related to behaviourism and capitalism represent a family of theories having different content, and that Piaget's constructivism and socialism also represent a unified family of theories.

It will further be argued that the theories related to behaviourist psychology and the political ideology of capitalism represent a family of theories emanating from the materialist model while Piaget's constructivism and the political ideology of socialism represent a family of theories generated from the dialectical model. As Reese and Overton so aptly describe 'the crucial difference is so fundamental and broad in its implications that syncretism is impossible, and the only rapprochement possible is like the parallel play of pre-schoolers in that the protagonists are separate, but equal and mutually tolerant'.[9] (p. 116).

Behaviourism

It is obviously beyond the scope of this paper to present a comprehensive description of the family of theories represented under the general rubric of behaviourism. The presentation will focus on the unifying aspects of behaviourism, and on methodological issues as they relate to the materialist model. A detailed analysis of this relationship can be found in Misiak's *The Philosophical Roots of Scientific Psychology* (1961).

As Skinner states 'behaviourism is not the science of human behaviour; it is the philosophy of the science'.[19] (p. 3). Skinner continues: 'Consider only those facts which can be objectively observed in the behaviour of one person in its relation to his prior environmental history. If all linkages are lawful, nothing is lost by neglecting a supposed nonphysical link.' (p. 13). Skinner terms this 'methodological behaviourism' and it is his contention that 'methodological behaviourism might be thought of as a psychological version of logical positivism'. (p.14).

A central theme for the psychology of behaviourism has focused on the analysis of causal determinants. Although great diversity exists among behaviourists most would agree that the creation, maintenance, and removal of behaviour depend on environmental events of stimuli, and a lawful, functional relationship exists between behaviour and environmental events. As Overton and Reese indicate 'Insofar as it is maintained that one event is productive of another event, regardless of whether those events are cloaked in the garb of conditional or functional relationships, a causal analysis is in fact being performed.'[20] (p. 76).

Within Western philosophical tradition, four causal determinants are generally posited. These being material, efficient, formal, and final causes. In contemporary psychological usage, material causes consist of the biological materials necessary for behaviour (biochemical, neurological, and hormonal). Efficient cause refers to the external stimuli or antecedent condition that stimulates organisms. Formal cause is the organizational pattern of psychological structure of an organism. Final cause is the end point toward which an organism develops.

Because behaviourism emanates from the previously described materialist model, only material and efficient causes are used to explain the determinants of human behaviour. Such a theory of psychology views 'organisms . . . as operating through the application of forces, resulting in chainlike sequences of events. In terms of explanation, this means it is assumed that only linear relationships exist between efficient causes and effects.'[20] (p. 82).

Throughout all of the behaviourist literature we find a downward thrust of the materialist model that focuses on efficient causality. The point at issue is that efficient causality is derived from a particular world view which assumes that experience can be reduced to situational specific sequences of independent antecedent and consequent events.

Joad summarizes the behaviourist position as it relates to the materialist model:

> . . . the movements in bodies of human beings are always determined by preceding movements in their bodies, these in their turn by preceding movements, and so on through a continuous chain of bodily movements, which ends with stimuli brought to bear on the body by the outside world to which the first movement in the chain is a response. Thus the law of cause and effect which operates universally in the outside world operates also within human bodies.[21] (p. 521).

Clearly the materialist model categorically defines the language and science of behaviourism. Behaviourism is essentially a translation of Galilean and

Newtonian mechanics in the explanation of the relationship between mental events and human action in terms of the chaining of independent, encapsulated, entities that follow natural law.

White summarizes the behaviourist point of view as follows:

1. The environment may be unambiguously characterized in terms of stimuli.
2. Behaviour may be unambiguously characterized in terms of responses.
3. A class of stimuli exists which, applied contingently and immediately following a response, increase it or decrease it in some measurable fashion. These stimuli may be treated as reinforcers.
4. Learning may be completely characterized in terms of various possible couplings among stimuli, responses, and reinforcers.
5. Unless there is definite evidence to the contrary, classes of behaviour may be assumed to be learned, manipulable by the environment, extinguishable, and trainable.[22] (pp. 665–66).

Finally, White indicates that for behaviourists 'there is, then, a unifying commitment to a scientific universe of Ss and Rs, and understanding of behavioural adaption as a process of response selection by reinforcement, and a methodological drive toward precision of observation and parsimony of interpretation'.[22] (p. 666).

The capitalist ideology

The focus of this section will primarily be addressed to the ideological context of capitalism and not to a functional description of capitalism as a system of economics. For the purpose of this paper, an ideology is conceptualized as a system of ideas and beliefs that is more or less shared by a social group.

Within this conceptual definition, C. Wright Mills identifies three characteristic aspects of an ideology:

1. An ideology represents a picture of social realities in which certain institutions or practices are justified and others are condemned;
2. An ideology contains assumptions about how a society is organized and how it functions;
3. An ideology is an ethic or an articulation of ideals that is used in judging men, events, and movements.[12] (pp. 12–13).

Ideologies arise in specific historical contexts; in response to definite circumstances and needs in relation to other sets of ideas. Capitalism is more than a theory of political economy. As an ideology it sets the tone for all aspects of society and all sides of man's life and culture. The capitalist ideology embodies the spirit, morals, values, and attitudes of the society that embraces its views of social reality.

Historically, the genesis of the ideology of modern capitalism can be found in the eighteenth-century *Zeitgeist* of materialist science. It is in the writing of Hobbes, Hume, and Locke that one finds the origins of the capitalist spirit. The entire conception of human and social sciences came under the influence of the Newtonian conceptions and methods. The eighteenth-century thinkers emphasized the notion of universal law and a causal order in every part of nature. The goal of the Enlightenment thinkers was to build up a complete social science on the model of physics. They believed it possible to arrive at a natural science of the production of wealth. The task of economic science was to discover and proclaim these laws.

In the work of Hobbes, Locke, and Hume, one finds a joining of materialist science and economic determinism. The eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers combined the Newtonian conception of universal law and a harmonious causal order with the problems related to the dignity and worth of man's life upon this earth. On the whole, the ruling class of contemporary capitalist society still holds to the political, moral and economic principles worked out in the eighteenth century, under the influence of Newtonian mechanics and in response to eighteenth-century social needs.

Two of these principles, hedonism and the exchange value of labour are central to the present-day capitalist ideology. Hedonism and the exchange value of labour represent the essential ideological core of contemporary capitalism. These dual principles follow Mill's criteria of an ideology. Hedonism and the exchange value of labour are used as a justification for class stratification, the role of government and social control, and the process of schooling which serves to transmit these principles.

The basic tenets of modern hedonism were set forth by Hobbes in his classic work *Leviathan*. In contrast to the religious ethic of the time, Hobbes advocated a hedonist or happiness philosophy. He felt that the true good and dignity of man was to be found in individual happiness.

The Hedonist philosophy that people act to achieve pleasure and escape from or avoid pain is similar to the behavioural psychology of B. F. Skinner. In *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, Skinner states:

> Man's struggle for freedom is not due to a will to be free, but to certain behavioural processes characteristic of the human organism, the chief effect of which is the avoidance or escape from so-called 'adversive' features of the environment.[23] (p. 34).

Hobbes' concept of happiness and Skinner's concept of freedom both refer to an avoidance of pain and a need for praise or positive reinforcement.
'We recognize a person's dignity or worth when we give him credit (praise) for what he has done'.[23] (p. 55).

One finds a similar orientation in Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*:

> Pleasure and pain, and that which causes them, good and evil, are the hinges on which our passions/turn . . . The uneasiness a man finds in himself upon the absence of anything, whose present enjoyment

> carries the idea of delight with it, is that we call desire; which is greater or less, as the uneasiness is more or less vehement . . . the chief, if not the only spur to human industry and action, is uneasiness.[24] (p. 65).

Locke's notion of 'uneasiness' is similar to Skinner's concept of negative reinforcement. 'Almost all living things act to free themselves from harmful contacts.'[23] (p. 24).

Hobbes' and Locke's hedonist philosophy furnished a psychological basis for the classical economics of Adam Smith. Human happiness consisted for Smith in the satisfaction of wants. It was Smith's belief that consumers should be left alone to select those goods which they thought would best satisfy their wants, and the producers should be allowed to produce unhindered goods which consumers selected. This is a direct outgrowth of the hedonist philosophy. From this perspective, Smith, in his classic work *Wealth of Nations*, posits an 'invisible hand' whereby the passions of individuals are led in a direction that will benefit the whole society. For Smith, the laws of the economic market were like the laws of the natural world.

Heilbroner summarizes Smith's laws of the market:

> Adam Smith's laws of the market are basically simple. They tell us that the outcome of a certain kind of behaviour in a certain social framework will bring about perfectly definite and foreseeable results. Specifically, they show us how the drive of individual self-interest in an environment of similarly motivated individuals will result in competition; and they further demonstrate how competition will result in the provision of those goods that society wants, in the quantities that society desires, and at the prices society is prepared to pay.[25] (pp. 49–50).

The 'invisible hand' of Smith is akin to the 'natural order' of the materialists and the laws of behaviour advocated by the behaviourist school of psychology. Clearly there is a model affinity between the psychological theories of behaviourism and theories of capitalism. Economic capitalism and psychological behaviourism share a common materialist framework. As distinct theoretical disciplines behaviourism and capitalism have gone their separate ways; historically and conceptually their genesis can be traced to a common model of reality found in the materialist conception of universal law. The psychology of behaviourism and the economics of capitalism represent a unified conception of man in an ordered universe. The materialist model of the universe as previously described represents the unifying principles of capitalism and behaviourism.

A second ideological concept of capitalism is that of the exchange value of labour. Once again one must examine the work of Adam Smith who was first to distinguish the use value of labour and the exchange value of labour. For Smith, the real value of a commodity lies not in its value in use but, rather, its value in exchange. The value of a commodity is an exchange of labour required to produce it. A worker sells his labour-power to a capitalist for its value, and the capitalist uses the labour-power to obtain commodities which have a value higher

than that of the labour-power purchased. Labour itself is an exchange commodity in the realization of a profit. Smith fervently believed that labour is the only standard by which one can compare the values of different commodities. The exchange value of labour for Smith was the cost of maintaining and reproducing the worker at a socially accepted standard of living. The exchange value of labour produces economic class stratification consisting of capitalists that control the means of production and a working class that only has its labour-power to sell.

The central ideological concept in the capitalist mode of production is the need to continually create and reproduce a labour class that is denied the means of production. Profits, or surplus value, arise when the capitalist class pays labour-power at its value (the cost of maintaining and reproducing the worker) and then produces commodities which have a higher value than that of the labour-power purchased. Thus labour is an exchange commodity with a value more than itself. The capitalist is able to capture this surplus value through the ownership of the means of production.

As long as labour-power is purchased as an exchange commodity there must be a superstructure within such a system to reproduce a labour class. This superstructure contains not only social and political ideas but institutions such as family, religion and schools that support and reproduce a class structure to produce labour as an exchange commodity. Later in this paper it will be shown how the institution of school plays a dominant role in the production and constant supply of labour for the capitalist class.

Piaget's constructivism: dialectical contradiction

Central to Piaget's theory of knowledge is the relationship between the subject and the object, or the organism and the environment. Deeply rooted in a biological perspective, Piaget's theory is 'essentially a theory of adaptation of thoughts to reality, even if this adaptation at last reveals, as does every adaptation, the existence of an inextricable interaction between subjects and objects.' [26] (p. 24). Viewing knowledge as a biological adaptation, the epistemology of Piaget rejects any form of subject-object dualism. For Piaget 'knowledge . . . neither arises from objects nor from the subject, but from interactions . . . between the subject and those objects'.[27] (p. 704). The theory of knowledge posited by Piaget reduces itself to 'analyzing how the subject becomes progressively able to know objects adequately, that is, how he becomes capable of objectivity'[27]. (p. 704).

Piaget's epistemological perspective sees the genesis of knowledge neither in objects nor from subjects but from a dialectical relationship between the two. Piaget's dialectical foundation is characterized in the accommodation–assimilation processes leading to intellectual adaptation. Intellectual adaptation is an equilibration between assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation for Piaget involves a cognitive restructuring of an object to match the subject's existing cognitive organization. Flavell describes assimilation as 'that of bending a reality event to the templet of one's ongoing structure'.[28] For Piaget 'no behaviour, even if it is new to the individual, constitutes an absolute beginning. It is always

grafted onto previous schemes and therefore amounts to assimilating new elements to already existing structures'.[27] (p. 707).

Accommodation refers to the restructuring of the subject's cognitive organization to the object. The subject must actively modify existing cognitive structures to meet the demands of a contradictory world of objects. The process of accommodation refers to the individual's tendency to change previously formed cognitive structures in response to novel environmental demands.

For Piaget, assimilation and accommodation occur simultaneously and are indissociable. Intellectual adaptation is a dynamic process that involves an inextricable relationship of subject and object. On one hand the subject assimilates reality objects into his own cognitive structures, and on the other hand the subject modifies or accommodates his existing psychological structures to match new reality objects. There can be no assimilation without accommodation and vice versa, (the only exception being play and imitation). Systems of meanings are constantly being reorganized. 'Changes in assimilatory structure direct new accommodations, and new accommodatory attempts stimulate structural reorganization'.[28] (p. 50).

Piaget's intellectual adaptation of accommodation and assimilation is a psychological application of Hegel's dialectical method of mutual contradiction.

> In their initial directions, assimilation and accommodation are obviously opposed to one another, since assimilation is conservative and tends to subordinate the environment to the organism as it is, whereas accommodation is the source of changes and leads the organism to the successive constraints of the environment. But if in their rudiment these two functions are antagonistic, it is precisely the role of mental life in general and of intelligence in particular to intercoordinate them.[29] (p. 352).

Knowing, in the dialectical sense, is the transforming of contradictory experience into momentary stable structures. Moessinger provides a comprehensive critique of Piaget on contradiction within a Marxian perspective.[30]

Knowledge as a construction

During his lifetime, Piaget has primarily been concerned with a single, yet global epistemological question: What is the nature of knowledge? As previously stated, the Piagetian epistemology does not view the genesis of knowledge in objects or in subjects, but from an inextricable dialectical interaction between the two. The natural consequence of this interaction is an individual's construction of knowledge. The construction of knowledge is a biological oriented process whereby a subject evolves his own objective sense of reality. Objectivity is not an initial property, but is invented by the subject. Therefore objectivity is highly individualistic and relativistic; not, as the materialists believe, a faithful copy of reality.

Since objective knowledge is not acquired by perceptual recordings of external data but has its genesis in interactions, Piaget posits two types of activity in the construction of knowledge: (1) the co-ordination of actions, and (2) the interrelations between objects. The two activities are interdependent and it is through action that the relations originate. The structures of action are *constructed* 'and are not given in objects, since they are dependent on action, nor in the subject, since the subject must learn how to coordinate his actions'.[27] (p. 704).

An example of such a co-ordination of action is described by Piaget in the child's acquisition of number. The development of the notion of number is based on a co-ordination of two distinct operations: classification and ordering relationships. One type of operation is not sufficient for a child to acquire the concept of number; there must be a co-ordinated synthesis of classification and relationships of order.

Central to the Piagetian epistemology of constructivism is the notion of the action or operation. In this context, knowledge is not obtained from objects but from the action itself.

> The living organism itself is not a mere mirror image of the properties of its environment. It evolves a *structure* which is *constructed* step by step in the course of epigenesis, and which is not entirely preformed.[27] (p. 705).

Unless the subject has acted on objects and internalized his action, he has not constructed knowledge. Piaget, as previously indicated, makes a distinction between two types of actions. The first of these actions consist primarily of sensorimotor activities such as pushing, pulling, or touching. These individual actions give rise to what Piaget terms figurative aspects of knowing. Figurative knowing is momentary and perception bound. The second type of action is based on co-ordinated actions and is termed operational knowing. Operational knowing can be equated to the Anglo-Saxon notion of 'thinking'.

The root of all logical thought is to be found in the co-ordination of actions which forms the basis of reflective abstraction. The origin of logical thinking is constructed by the subject and is to be found in the actions of the subject and more specifically in the co-ordination of his actions.

> Summarizing the constructionalist notion of knowledge, Piaget states: . . . knowledge results from continuous construction, since in each set of understanding, some degree of invention is involved; in development, the passage from one stage to the next is always characterized by the formation of new structures which did not exist before, either in the external world or in the subject's mind.[31] (p. 77).

Types of knowledge

Piaget identifies two types of knowledge: physical knowledge and logico-mathematical knowledge. Physical knowledge is abstracted by the subject from objects themselves. For example, a child can lift objects in his hand and realize that they have different weights, he finds this out experimentally, and his knowledge is extracted from the objects. It is the physical experience that allows the child to discover weight. Physical knowledge gives rise to figurative aspects of knowing, because the subject attempts to represent reality as it appears without transforming it.

Logico-mathematical knowledge is derived from the knowing activity itself and therefore is constructed by the subject. In logico-mathematical knowledge, the subject reflects on its own co-ordinating activity to give rise to what Piaget terms reflective abstraction. Reflective abstraction is a cognitive process consisting of an internal feedback mechanism where the subject reflects on its own co-ordinating activities. The reflecting is not a passive or introspective process, but a co-ordinated system of actions that progressively expands the internal structure. Piaget notes

> . . . we can speak of logico-mathematical experiments, which extract information from the properties of actions applied to objects, and not from the objects themselves . . . [27] (p. 728).

In reflective abstraction, the subject abstracts logical relationships among objects. For example, if a child lifts objects each of a different weight then physical knowledge can be abstracted to allow the child to indicate the heaviest. However, to have the child place the objects in a serial relationship from the heaviest to the lightest requires reflective abstraction, that is, ordering relationships are not to be found in the objects themselves but must be constructed by the child as a result of his co-ordinated actions. The serial relationship is a form of logico-mathematical knowledge and is constructed by the child; not from the physical knowledge of the objects.

The revolutionary aspect of Piaget's epistemological notion of logico-mathematical knowledge rests in the fact that such knowledge is not directly teachable because it is constructed out of reflective abstraction giving rise to object relationships the subject has invented himself. It is extremely difficult for those of us schooled in an empiricist tradition, but the Piagetian epistemology related to the origin of logico-mathematical knowledge clearly supports the notion that no one taught us how to perform arithmetic operations such as addition and multiplication, or even the class inclusion principle necessary to understand the nature of a state's relationship to its capital. Every logico-mathematical relationship is constructed, and every subsequent relationship is a relationship among relationships. The process of forming such relationships is reflective abstraction. Because Piaget views the process of reflective abstraction as like any biological function, all normal children will acquire logico-mathematical knowledge without the need of didactic teaching. Once acquired, logico-mathematical knowledge becomes part of the subject and therefore cannot be forgotten but only used as additional structures for future reflective

abstraction in the formation of new logico-mathematical knowledge. The basic Piagetian epistemology can be summarized as follows:

1. Knowledge has its origin neither in objects nor subjects, but from an inextricable dialectical relationship between the subjects and objects.
2. Knowledge is a construction which is a natural consequence of the subject-object interactions.
3. Knowledge that is abstracted directly from objects is physical knowledge while knowledge that is a result of co-ordinated actions is termed logico-mathematical knowledge.

The socialist ideology

As in the previous section on the capitalist ideology, the following description of socialism will primarily focus on the ideological context of socialism and not a functional analysis of socialism as a form of political economy. This section is also not intended to be a Marxist critique of capitalist political-economy, though the philosophy of Marx will be used as an ideological foundation of socialism. The two central ideas of praxis and the social relations of production form the ideological core of socialism.

To grasp the significance of praxis and the social relations of production, one must understand the Marxian conception of history. Marx's dialectical materialism incorporated Hegel's idea of inherent change and the materialist notion of philosophy being grounded on social and environmental events and not ideas. Marx believed that the productive forces of a society determine the way people make a living and, at the same time, the way they relate to one another. The productive forces and the social relations of production shape the 'superstructure' of a society's institutions and their modes of thought and views of life. For Marx, individuals' material lives determine the ideas and beliefs that support these institutions. Marx summarizes this position when he states:

> The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of the politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down, as in *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life process.[32] (p. 247).

Marx constantly stressed the essential unity of theory and practice or thought and action. Dialectical materialism rejects metaphysics as traditionally conceived as mere knowing of reality. Marx's doctrine maintains that the knowing of reality was also the changing of it. Knowing for Marx was not an end in itself; we know in order to act. Knowledge cannot be understood independently of its relation to action. Action, within a Marxian perspective, changes the objects in the environment acted upon and it also changes the subject.

Piaget's conception of knowledge and the process of knowing is remarkably similar to that of Marx:

> To know is to transform reality in order to understand how a certain state is brought about . . . knowing an object does not mean copying it —it means acting upon it. It means constructing systems of transformations that can be carried out on or with this object.[31] (p. 15).

The Marxian notion that the truth of reality must be demonstrated in practice and not in theory or metaphysical abstractions is termed praxis. Praxis denies the traditional dualism of theory-practice, thought-action and structure-function. Within an ideological context of socialism, praxis provides a unification of consciousness and society. Praxis allows individuals to recognize the contradictions that exist in a society. Objects become objects for social use rather than abstract exchange value. In praxis, there is no split between thinking and doing.

Capitalist ideologies with their emphasis on hedonism and the exchange value of labour encourage a split between individuals and objects. This leads to what Marx termed an alienation of the individual from the environment. Individuals become alienated not only from objects, but also from others and themselves. This brings us to the second ideological principle of socialism, the social relations of production. The social relations of production are class structures of a society. As Marx states:

> As a general rule, articles of utility become commodities only because they are products of private individuals or groups of individuals who carry on their work independently of each other. The sum total of the labour of all these private individuals forms the aggregate labour of society. Since the producers do not come into contact with each other, the specific social character of each producer's labour does not show itself except in the act of exchange. In other words, the labour of the individual asserts itself as a part of the labour of society only through the relations which the act of exchange establishes directly between the products and indirectly through the products. To the latter, therefore, the social relations between the labour of private individuals appear for what they are, i.e. not as the direct social relations of persons in their work, but rather as material relations of persons and social relations of things.[33] (p. 35).

Capitalist ideology uses hedonism and the exchange value of labour to support an economically stratified social system. This is necessary to ensure a 'happy', yet cheap, labour force to maintain the prevailing economic order.

The 'drive-energy' of capitalism is dependent on a constant reservoir of cheap yet happy labour. To maintain a marginal level of happiness, capitalism provides for the material well-being of its labour class, that is, for reproducing the worker at a socially accepted standard of living.

The socialist ideology within a context of praxis and the social relations of production advocates a redistribution of wealth to create an egalitarian society in which no class may gain the advantageous position brought about by the ownership of the society's means of production. Socialism as a political ideology supports the creation of a society free of individual hedonism and built on motives of co-operation and social-use value. Such an ideology will prevent alienation of the worker from his labour and his fellow man. Socialism emphasizes qualitative social relations. The socialist ideology is a relationship between people and people, while capitalism is a relationship of people and commodities.

Practice: schooling as political ideology

The previous sections of this paper have argued that the economic ideology of capitalism and the psychological foundations of behaviourism are derived from a common materialist model. The constructivism of Piaget and the socialist ideology emanate from a dialectical model. It is argued in this section that any form of educational practice must be categorically consistent from model to theory to practice.

The institution of school and the practice of schooling is essentially part of the society's superstructure which moulds the social, political, and intellectual beliefs of its citizens. The practice of schooling within a capitalist–behaviourist framework is mutually exclusive to the practice of schooling within a socialist–constructivist framework. Any application of Piaget's constructivism to the practice of schooling must be examined in light of the overriding functions of schools in America; that is, to promulgate the political ideology of capitalism through the psychology of behaviourism. As Riegel points out there is an 'intimate connection between the economic and political ideologies and the development of the sciences'.[10] (p. 129). This connexion is solidified at the practice level of schooling.

Capitalist—behaviourist schooling

The myth of American education rests on the assumption that the process of schooling can overcome the unequalling forces inherent in a capitalist economy. However, if one carefully examines the practice of schooling, we find that schools are organized to meet the demands of a capitalist society by using the psychology of behaviourism. Schools as a socializing institution have developed a life of their own that reflects the economic social structure of the society. Educational practice is a form of social control. Through the psychology of behaviourism, students are systematically rewarded for behaviour and ideas that reflect the behaviour and ideas of the ruling class.

The bureaucratic organization of schools mirrors in every detail the hierarchical structure of a capitalist corporation. Executive authority is vested in the power of the superintendent, middle-line management is found in the building administrators, production line workers are the teachers, and finally the student is the commodity. The behaviourally-oriented reward system follows in every detail the hedonist philosophy of capitalism. Grades and the threat of failure parallels the role of wages and the fear of being fired in the world of work.

> The educational system helps integrate youth into the economic system, we believe, through a structural correspondence between its social relations and those of production. The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the work place, but develops the types of personal demeanour, modes of self-presentation, self-image and social-class identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically the social relationships of education—the relationships between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and students and their work—replicate the hierarchical division of labour. Hierarchical relations are reflected in the vertical authority lines from administrators to teachers to students. Alienated labour is reflected in the student's lack of control over his or her education, the alienation of the student from the curriculum content, the motivation of school work through a system of grades and other external rewards rather than the student's integration with either the process (learning) or the outcome (knowledge) of the educational 'production process'. Fragmentation in work is reflected in the institutionalized and often destructive competition among students through continual and ostensibly meritocratic ranking and evaluation. By attuning young people to a set of social relationships similar to those of the work place, school attempts to gear the development of personal needs to its requirements.[34] (p. 131).

The continual emphasis on testing and specifically I.Q. testing serves to legitimize a stratification systems in schools. Testing provides a unique justification for individual differences to maintain a constant supply of cheap labour and maintain class stratification. The role of schools within a capitalist–behaviourist framework is to *produce* workers to feed into an unequal economic system. Such an orientation as Riegel points out 'implies a model of continuous growth in which all individuals are evaluated against single standards.'[10] (p. 129)

Bowles and Gintis present empirical data that demonstrates that the I.Q. ideology serves to legitimate the hierarchical division of labour.[35] They present both statistical and historical evidence that indicates that 'the I.Q. ideology operates to reconcile workers to their eventual economic positions primarily via the schooling experience . . .' (p. 34).

The practice of schooling is, in America, totally consistent with the theoretical foundations of capitalism and behaviourism; both of which emanate from the more general materialist model. The structure of education reflects the hedonism and exchange value principle inherent in capitalism. It also reflects behaviourism in that it reinforces youth to work for external rewards.

Socialist-constructivist schooling

Of the more than 1200 books and articles written by Piaget, only two have been directly addressed to the practice of schooling. These being *The Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child*[36] and *To Understand is to Invent*.[37] Both of these volumes are collections of essays written by Piaget for UNESCO.

Piaget's constructivism advocates a pedagogy that supports a holistic and dialectical model of development rather than a reductionist and mechanistic emphasis on learning.

> The main point of our theory is that knowledge results from *interactions* between the subject and the object, which are *richer* than the objects can provide by themselves. Learning theories like Hull's on the other hand reduce knowledge to direct 'functional copies' which do not enrich reality. The problem we must solve in order to explain cognitive development, is that of *invention* and not of mere copying. And neither stimulus-response generalizations nor the introduction of transformational responses can explain novelty or invention. By contrast, the concepts of assimilation and accommodation and of operational structures (which are created not merely discovered, as a result of the subject's activities), are oriented toward this inventive construction which characterizes all living thought . . . Remember also that each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered for himself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely.[27] (pp. 714–15).

Here are some remarks Piaget made at a 1964 conference on cognitive studies and curriculum development held at Cornell University:

> Experience is always necessary for intellectual development . . . The subject must be active, must transform things, and then find the structure of his own actions on the objects.
>
> . . . children must communicate with each other. This is an essential factor in intellectual development. Cooperation is indeed co-operation.
>
> The teacher must provide the instruments which the children can use to decide things by themselves . . . a ready-made truth is only a half-truth.
>
> The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done—men who are creative, inventive, and discoverers. The second goal of education is to form minds which can be critical, can verify, and not accept everything they are offered. The great danger today is of slogans, collective opinions, ready-made trends of thought.[38] (pp. 4–5).

Piaget's constructivism supports a pedagogy that emphasizes qualitative measures of cognitive competence rather than quantitative measures of cognitive

performance. The dialectical nature of constructivism posits a developmental model of discontinuous growth that is evaluated in terms of the collective needs of the society rather than a learning model of continuous growth where children are evaluated against rigid class biased standards. 'Thus, it appears that in order to bring education into line with the needs of society, it would be necessary to undertake a complete revision of the methods and aims of education, rather than to be satisfied with simple appeals to common sense.'[37] (p. 12).

> . . . it should be underlined right away that the right to an ethical and intellectual education implies more than a right to acquire knowledge or listen, and more than an obligation to obey: it is a question of a right to forge certain precious spiritual tools in everyone, which requires a specific social environment, not made exclusively of submissiveness.[37] (pp. 51-52).

Throughout all of Piaget's writing related to education, nowhere is he more critical than in the area of examinations:

> Everything has been said about the value of scholastic examinations, and yet this veritable plague on education at all levels continues to poison —such terminology is not too strong here—normal relations between the teacher and student by jeopardizing both parties' joy in work as well as mutual confidence. The two basic faults of the examination are that generally it does not give objective results, and it becomes, fatally an end in itself (for even admission examinations are always, first of all final examinations: the admission examination to high school becomes an end for primary education, etc.). The school examination is not objective, first because it depends more on memory than on the constructive capabilities of the student (as if he were condemned never to be able to use his books once he was out of school!). Anyone can confirm how little the grading that results from examination corresponds to the final useful work of people in life. The school examination becomes an end in itself because it dominates the teacher's concerns, instead of fostering his natural role as one who stimulates consciences and minds, and he directs all the work of the students toward the artificial result which is success on final tests, instead of calling attention to the student's real activities and personality.[37] (pp. 73-74).

Piaget parallels the educational process in industralized societies to the ceremonial rites of passage in primitive tribes. The practice of schooling within this context is 'to impress the totality of commonly accepted truths upon the younger generation, which means the collective values and standards that have already assured the cohesion of previous generations'.[37] (p. 89).

Piaget feels that education is an indissociable whole. If a child is intellectually passive, he will not know how to be ethically free. Conversely, if a child's ethical development consists in the submission to adult authority and social relations that constitute the life of a classroom, the child will not know how to be intellectually active.

Piaget feels that:

> If the teaching consists of simply giving lessons and having them repeated in 'recitations' or 'tests' and of having them applied to some practical exercises that are always prescribed, the results obtained from the pupil will have hardly more meaning than in the case of any school examination, without considering the element of chance for the moment. It is only to the extent that the teaching methods are 'active'—in that they form a greater and greater part of initiatives and spontaneous efforts of the student—the results obtained have meaning.[37] (pp. 77–78).

The application of Piaget's constructivism to the practice of schooling must be done within the context of ethical education. Piaget asks:

> Do we wish to form people who are subjected to the restraints of earlier generations and traditions? If so, then the authority of the teacher is enough . . . with the system of rewards and punishments reinforcing this obedient behaviour.[37] (pp. 109–10).

Piaget feels that the dialectical method should be employed in ethical education. Discipline that originates externally to the child produces conformist behaviour that results in a child simply responding to rules that have no personal meaning. Such an orientation does not allow the child to experience a reciprocity with others and the possibility of constructing new rules when confronted with contradictory circumstances.

> . . . by resorting to reciprocity instead of authority, a way of building confidence instead of punishing is aspired upon which encourages the development of the moral personality more than any restriction or external discipline.[37] (p. 124).

Within Piaget's constructivism, the spirit of an ethical education of co-operation 'cannot be attained by any of the common methods'.[37] (p. 125). Schooling must be a 'lived' experience and cannot be developed in an atmosphere of moral and intellectual constraints.

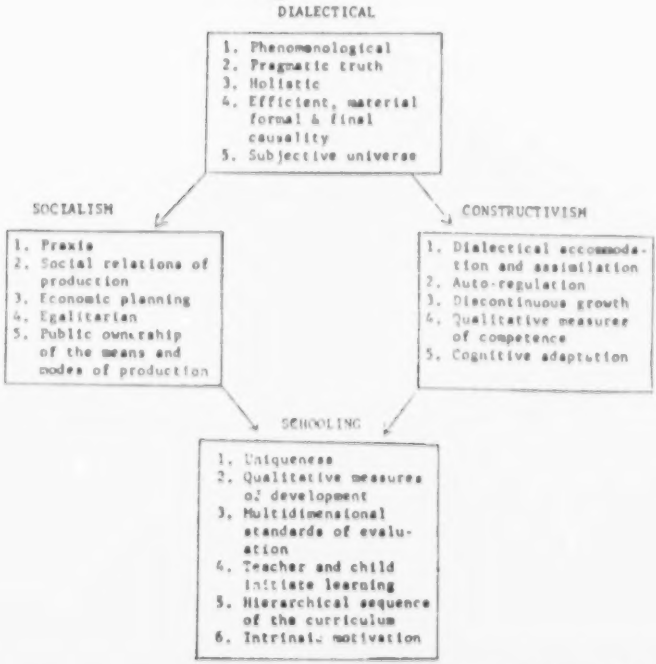
Summary and conclusions

The primary purpose of this paper was to demonstrate that the theoretical foundations of capitalism and behaviourism are mutually exclusive to the theoretical foundations of socialism and constructivism. Capitalism and behaviorism emanate from a more general materialist model while constructivism and socialism have their genesis in a dialectical model. It was argued that any form of educational practice derived from a categorical flow of model to theory to practice is also mutually exclusive. Figures 1 and 2 represent a diagrammatic summary of this categorical flow.

Any application of Piaget's constructivism as a system of education reform must be viewed within the total context of social and political reform. As Hans Furth indicates:

Figure 1

Figure 2



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> . . . the implications of Piaget's theory of operational intelligence are not limited to psychological science . . . really revolutionary changes in the whole field of education and human relations seem to be a direct consequence of a deeper understanding of Piaget's theory. Who dares to guess how our primary education would change if teachers really took seriously Piaget's proposition that knowledge is an operation that constructs its objects?[39] (p. 7).

For a society to advocate a process of schooling that has as its primary objective the development of critical thinking and reasoning, as is suggested by Piaget's constructivism, is to ask that society question the basic assumptions underlying its political ideology. The pedagogical foundations of schooling in America are based on the epistemology of materialism and the psychology of methodological behaviourism. Such a foundation suggests that the psychological world consists of responses that are selected by environmental consequences. Therefore, the overriding reinforcement for a given response is the degree to which that response reflects the accepted political and social ideology of American capitalism.

All theories of psychology provide a basic rationale of how to promote intellectual functioning, but the question of can schools provide such a climate of inquiry is a question of the epistemological and psychological foundations of corporate capitalism. Perhaps the most important, yet ignored issues related to a curriculum of thinking and reasoning, is the relationship between one's epistemology about children and instructional methods on one hand, and the relationship between the nature of schooling and its outcomes, in terms of the kind of children produced, on the other. To posit a different epistemological and psychological foundation as suggested by Piaget's constructivism presupposes an image of mankind and knowledge that is inconsistent with the capitalist ideology.

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Making student 'types': the links between professional and commonsense knowledge systems and educational practice

4

Dennis L. Carlson

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Historically, educational psychology has taken as its central task the development of an authoritative and "objective" knowledge base which professional educators may draw upon in describing children's learning characteristics and problems, and defining their corresponding learning "needs." In recent years, however, a number of critical, phenomenologically-oriented sociologists have questioned some of the taken-for-granted presuppositions incorporated in scientific and professional knowledge systems and, thereby, have brought into question both the authoritativeness and objectivity of professional depictions of children (Apple, 1979; Bernbaum, 1977; Hurn, 1976; Sharp and Green, 1975; and Young, 1971). This analysis has been carried out on several related levels, relevant both to the values that professional educational knowledge incorporates and to the functions that it assumes.

Regarding the values issue, critics have argued that professional knowledge incorporates the commonsense, reductionistic world view and objectified social relations characteristic of advanced corporate and bureaucratic society. In education, professional knowledge has incorporated this reductionistic world view by reducing children to personality "types" and their experiences to objectified categories of behavior. Regarding the second issue, that of the functions performed by professional knowledge systems, critics have focused upon the role these systems assume in legitimizing educational policies and practices. Most notably, by presenting sorting and classification procedures in terms of "objective" differences among children, professional logic has relegated an inherently political and social issue to the level of individual psychosocial adjustment.

If a number of sociologists have provided the theoretical groundwork for an exploration of these links between educational knowledge systems and a system of objectified social relations in the school, much now needs to be done to embed this analysis within existing educational practice through ethnographic research in schools.[1] We need to know how teachers use their professional and commonsense corpus of knowledge about children in the particular institutional context of the school to giving meaning to their everyday social relations with children; for it is at this level of everyday life that recurrent, predictable forms of objectified relations are constructed by teachers, administrators, and children.

This study represents an attempt at such a phenomenological ethnography, specifically with regard to the analysis of objectification as an everyday feature of school life. For approximately 12 hours per week over one year, the author observed an innovative elementary school which had strong working ties with a

university-based research and development centre[2] and which used an objective-based, individualized instructional program. The school (which we will call McCann Elementary School) represented an ideal setting to study how professional conceptions of children are applied within a highly structured and rationalized instructional system. The study focuses upon the development of a school program for a special group of children defined as having "exceptional educational needs" related to their presumed lack of "self-directedness." My objective is to document the process whereby these children were reduced to a specific learning "type" and how their relations with the staff were regulated accordingly. This entails an examination of the particular organizational and instructional environment of the school within which the development of student "types" served the pragmatic, everyday interests of the staff. It also entails an analysis of the professional and commonsense knowledge systems which the staff used to depict children and give meaning to an objectified system of teacher/student relations. Objectification as an educational phenomenon is thus embedded in a real world of taken-for-granted presuppositions and objective institutional conditions.

I chose one instructional "unit" in the school (consisting of four cooperating teachers and approximately 110 third and fourth grade children) for intensive observation. The unit included a special "directed room" for those children presumed to need more teacher direction and a more secure environment within which to learn. Aside from recording a good deal of teacher talk in classes, I tape recorded interviews with each of the four unit teachers, the two building administrators on several separate occasions, and a number of teacher meetings. Finally, I interacted informally with the teachers and administrators during lunch, between classes, and after school, and kept notes on all of these encounters.

But before taking up the case study in more detail, the reader deserves a more extensive introduction to the notion of objectification as a construct in scientific and professional knowledge systems and as linked to a commonsense world view and system of institutional relations. We also need to place this analysis within a tradition of critical sociological inquiry on social reproduction, and thereby relate it more directly to the particular roles schools assume in reproducing important social structures.

Objectification as an Everyday Phenomenon: The Links Between Professional and Commonsense Knowledge Systems and Educational Practice

If the "science of education" has always played an important role in shaping the questions we ask about schooling, legitimizing and informing public educational practice, and providing an authoritative knowledge base for educational professionalism, somewhat ironically this has been because it has claimed to stand apart from the practical, everyday world in a disinterested search for "facts" about students and learning. The true social scientist, according to Durkheim, "studies these social facts to know them, and only to know them, in an absolutely disinterested fashion. . . . Science begins at the point where knowledge, whatever it may be, is sought for itself" (1956, p. 93). This very disinterestedness, Durkeim argued, makes social science suitable for shaping a "practical theory" of education, since "the theoretical notions from which the practical consequences are deduced have a scientific value which is imparted to the conclusions that one draws from them" (p. 102).

These claims of disinterestedness and authoritativeness are, of course,

related to the acceptance by the "science of education" of the natural science or positivist paradigm. According to that paradigm, reality has an objective or factual existence independent of our subjective impressions of it. In society, this objective reality is assumed to lie hidden beneath various political, ideological, and personal interpretations. The task of the social scientist is to disclose the true objective character of social reality by reducing, through technical and rational processes of measurement and classification, all social phenomena to "facts." Supporters of this paradigm in sociology and psychology have thus attempted to sustain the claim that because of its factual character, "scientific" or "objective" knowledge should be regarded as the exemplar of everything which can legitimately be considered knowledge (Giddens, 1976, p. 13).

In their studies of scientific knowledge systems, phenomenologists have emphasized that the "objective" depiction of society actually incorporates a basic presupposition of everyday life: that social reality exists separate from, and independent of, the human actors who create and sustain it. In "objective" social science, as in everyday life, social structure tends to be taken for granted as solid and immutable, and human experience is reduced to typical patterns of behavior. The active role of individuals in the structuring and restructuring of society is largely ignored.

This phenomenological analysis of reductionism in everyday life and in scientific knowledge systems has provided a jumping off point for a more explicitly sociological and historical analysis of social meaning and social structure, which has its roots in the writings of Karl Marx and Max Weber. Both men attempted to locate particular reductionistic conceptions of individual experience within the context of "modern" and "rational" modes of social organization and production. Weber recognized that the objectification of experience and relations through "calculable rules" was the common characteristic of both industry and bureaucracy.

> The "objective" discharge of business primarily means a discharge of business according to *calculable rules* and "without regard for persons."
>
> "Without regard for persons" is also the watchword of the "market" and in general, of all pursuits of naked economic interests. . . . "Calculable rules" also is of paramount importance for modern bureaucracy. . . . Its specific nature, which is welcomed by capitalism, develops the more perfectly the more the bureaucracy is "dehumanized." (Weber, 1946, pp. 215-216)

According to Marx, the particularly modern form of human objectification (*Vergegenstandlichung*) could be directly attributed to a capitalist mode of production in which individuals, in common with the material culture they produce, are "commodified." That is, the manner in which capitalism deals with material commodities is transferred to relations with individuals. Marx's early writings (*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* and *The German Ideology*) provide an explicit statement of this social reductionism through which capitalism makes all personal relations take the form of objective relations between "things." In turn, Marx recognized that the apperception of the social world as "thing"-like and "factual" concealed the real social and historical origins of human relations, the institutional and ideological means of their perpetuation, and the possibility of transforming them.

Twentieth century Marxist theoreticians, including Antonio Gramsci (1957), Georg Lukács (1973), and the critical theorists of the Frankfurt Institute (1972), have extended this critique in more phenomenological terms by arguing

that once a particular objectified, economic view of human experience and social relations comes to dominate in major institutions, it not only becomes accepted as taken-for-granted knowledge of the way things are but also of the way they should be and must be. Thus, a culture "hegemony" develops at the level of consciousness, and the commonsense reductionistic world view is incorporated in all forms of social organization and knowledge, including scientific and professional knowledge.

When we turn to education, it is evident that the objectivist presuppositions of scientific and professional knowledge have been inextricably linked with a number of important movements designed to align better the organization of schooling with the organization of an increasingly corporate and bureaucratic economy. Historical studies of such educational reform movements as the "cult of efficiency" (Callahan, 1962), "social efficiency" (Drost, 1967, "human engineering" (Nobel, 1977), and standardized testing (Karier, Violas, and Spring, 1973), have all drawn close parallels between "scientific" knowledge on the one hand and corporate interests on the other.

Similarly, in educational psychology, the two dominant traditions of research and theory have been aligned with management-level movements aimed at more efficient organizing of instructional processes and control of the institutional experiences of large groups of children. The first of these traditions is represented, on the scientific level, by the methodological reduction of children to dependent variables in controlled experiments and to the stimulus-response model of learning. According to Bugelski (1971):

> The learner can, in general, be conditioned to respond favorably or unfavorably to his teacher, the content material, the environmental surroundings, indeed to anything that can function as a stimulus. (p. 51)

At the level of educational practice, this objectivist presupposition has entered into the search for more effective methods of structuring the curriculum and the instructional environment so as to control student behavior and achievement more effectively. Its most recent outgrowths have been behavior modification and individualized instruction.

A second reductionistic tradition in educational psychology is that associated, at the scientific level, with the study of student differences and, at the practical level, with the sorting and classification of children in schools. In the search for "facts" about children, educational psychologists have always accepted a classificatory view of children that is based on measurable differences in behaviors and attitudes. Edward Thorndike, for example, identified the major objective of educational psychology to be the "effective description of the facts of individual differences" (1903, p. 2). Since the early twentieth century, educational psychology has been presented as a practical and authoritative basis for making decisions about student classification and placement. The scientific image of educational psychology has been reinforced by invoking the metalanguage of medicine, the applied science *par excellence*. For example, Bardon and Bennett (1974) define a professional educational diagnosis as:

> The process of assigning a person to one of the parts of a classification system based on a careful analysis of etiology, symptoms, and courses of development, leading to a prediction of outcome. . . . The classification category is a kind of shorthand method to describe the child's educational problems and possibilities. (p. 56)

Lately, the trend in educational psychology and educational practice has been to "individualize" this diagnostic and classificatory process and, thus, more

effectively to tailor instruction to the particular "needs" of each child. Learning "needs" are to be assessed on the basis of a multivariate analysis of each child's "learning style," "stage of readiness," "developmental level," "skill level," etc. (see, for example, Lewis, Jr., 1971; Noar, 1972; Tyler, 1974; and Weisgerber, 1971). Exemplifying this trend, Weisgerber advocates viewing the child as a "complicated *system* composed of differentiated subsystems" (1971, p. 146). "Individualization," in this sense, is not less reductionistic than more traditional diagnostic processes, for it continues the epistemic tradition in educational psychology of treating children in terms of learning "types," although the number of types may be expanded and the analysis of each child may be more sophisticated. In fact, individualization may involve a more complex objectification of the child, since more of the child's experience and background are made subjects of classificatory interest; and it need not imply the abandonment of student groupings, since students with similar learning "characteristics," "needs," and "skill levels" may be grouped for special treatment following an individualized assessment, as was the case at McCann School.

The point is not merely that professional depictions of "objective" student differences have been used to legitimize a system of sorting and stratifying students in schools (although they have certainly assumed such a role, and continue to do so, despite rhetoric about individualization) but that, on a more complex level, professional and scientific knowledge has dialectically entered into the objectification of teacher/student relations which has accompanied the bureaucratization and rationalization of schooling in the twentieth century. And it has reinforced a commonsense presupposition in society that there are distinctive "types" of individuals with similar innate or acquired traits, and that these "objective" differences between individuals account for much of the inequality in their treatment within institutions.

McCann Elementary School and The "IIP" System of Individualized Instruction

Following the above theoretical introduction, we are now ready to examine objectification as an everyday phenomenon in school practice, embedded in a system of instructional organization, and depicted by the staff's professional and commonsense knowledge systems. Phenomenological ethnographies along these lines have been relatively few in the sociology of education and I hope that the following case study, quite apart from the educational issues it raises, will serve to direct attention toward methodological issues in the analysis of educational knowledge systems and their relationship to educational practice.

The school chosen for study, McCann Elementary School, is situated in a small, midwestern, suburban community, within ten miles of a city of 200,000 people. When the school opened in 1968, it was the only one in several adjoining states to be built on the "open plan" design, with no traditional, self-contained classrooms. Classes were conducted around the periphery of a large, open floor area, and children were given considerable freedom to move about as they worked on their individualized instructional packets. They were also given the option of working alone, with friends, or with the teacher, and a certain level of "work talk" was tolerated. As noted earlier, McCann School had strong, long-standing ties with a federally-supported Educational Research and Development Centre at the state university in the nearby city. In fact, the individualized instructional programs used at the school had been largely developed by the R&D Centre. This instructional program was broken down into

a number of "skill areas," with a hierarchy of instructional objectives in each. For each objective, there was an individualized, self-guiding curriculum as well as a set of criterion-referenced pre-tests and post-tests. When children "mastered" an objective, they moved up to the next objective in the hierarchy. Finally, the entire instructional program was computer-managed and monitored.

Children in Individualized Instructional Planning schools, including McCann School, are grouped in instructional "units" of approximately 100-120 children and four cooperating teachers. Classes in each instructional unit are typically ability-grouped, with new groups formed at the end of each pre-test-post-test cycle in each skill area. Each instructional unit includes children from two adjoining grades, with adjoining units sharing overlapping grades. Thus, at McCann School, Unit One had kindergarten and first grade children, Unit Two had first and second grade children, and so on. This allowed teachers some discretion in promoting the child or retaining him for another year in the same unit, based on an assessment of the child's social and emotional "maturity level."

Although McCann School had been among the first to use this individualized model for instructional programming and organization, it had been marketed by the R&D Centre to over two thousand elementary schools across the country. Individualized Instructional Planning (or IIP as it was called — not its real name) represents a sophisticated and comprehensive application of scientific research and development techniques to the organization of the instructional process. It is an "accountable" system to the extent that it defines learning in terms of discrete, measurable skills; and it is an "individualized" system in that it attempts to tailor instruction not only to the skill level, but also to the particular characteristics and needs of each child.

The Directed Room Program

The individualized curriculum at McCann School was designed to shift much of the everyday responsibility for guiding the instructional program to the student. It was the staff's belief that most children in the school were "self-directed" and "self-disciplined" enough to assume such responsibility. But there were some children who lacked even the minimal self-direction needed to function successfully in the open learning environment, and these were believed to need a more "protective," "disciplined," and "teacher-directed" learning environment, and were therefore assigned to two special self-contained "directed rooms" in adjoining corners of the open instructional area. The children in each directed room were supervised by a single teacher who employed a more traditional form of classroom control during the entire day.

Although there were only two directed rooms in the school, they took on added significance because children could be transferred from the Unit Two directed room to the Unit Four directed room, thereby skipping Unit Three entirely. For example, it was possible for a child to be assigned to the Unit Two directed room as a first grader and again as a second grader, then be transferred to the Unit Four directed room as a third grader and remain in the room as a fourth grader. Because the program had been in existence only two years, this potential had not been fully realized, but there were indications that such a pattern was developing.[1] Thus, the tendency was to lock "directed" children into a special track which not only affected their relations with the staff but with other children as well, since it effectively segregated them for most of the school day.

Instructional Organization

To gain a better understanding of why the directed room program was developed and what practical role it assumed in the school, we need to examine in more detail the organization of the IIP instructional program and its impact on teacher/student relations at McCann School. The IIP instructional program and plan for the school is codified in a detailed "scope and sequence" notebook which listed yearly objectives for student progress in each "skill area," and for each age level. Teachers in each unit were responsible for insuring that a specified percentage of their students has "mastered" a specified level of objective in a specified skill area over a specified period of time. An example of one such yearly objective for Unit Four teacher was:

Focus Area	Specific Objectives	Year in School	Evaluation Instrument
Reading Comprehension	As specified by R&D Centre Reading Comprehension Program	50% thru D-level 50% thru E-level	R&D Centre criterion-referenced tests

Michael Dorsey, the school counselor, explicitly related such a system of objectives to the "quality control routinely employed in industry," and he and another staff member were working on a more sophisticated system to monitor progress toward yearly "scope and sequence" objectives. In this system, teachers in each unit would get monthly computer readouts on how far they had progressed relative to yearly objectives. Michael Dorsey was also aware of criticism from some teachers that too much accountability could lead to a "Big Brother" syndrome in the school, and he consequently stressed that accountability systems were designed to assess the effectiveness of the instructional program rather than the teaching staff, and therefore teachers should not get "up tight" about it. He noted in an interview:

> When someone makes a textbook it goes through quality control, right? If it's not any good, they throw it out, right? Well, a teaching model is the same. We've got the kids. We teach them. We want to evaluate how they're doing. So my whole thing is to say, "Hey, evaluation isn't that Big Brother concept. It's for you folks" [teachers].

This concern for close "quality control" over the pace of the instructional process produced a somewhat frustrating situation for teachers in their everyday class life. If teachers felt pressure to keep their children moving through the specified curriculum at the proper pace, they also felt frustrated in their ability to handle children who would not stay "on task." They felt that these children needed to be reminded continually to get back to work and not to distract other children who were working. The work frame was always fragile, and a vocal comment or a sudden movement by one or more children was capable of "throwing off" an entire class and even disturbing nearby classes. Yet because of the self-guided character of the instructional process, teachers exercised little direct control over classroom work, and this hampered them from dealing more effectively with "problem" children. Furthermore, their time was severely restricted. While children were supposedly working, teachers were expected to administer and correct pre-tests and post-tests, record scores, check students' work, and provide information and assistance to those students who either sought or "needed" it.

In such an environment, teachers and administrators began to feel that the

proper "work climate" could be maintained and expected progress made toward yearly "scope and sequence" objectives only if something could be done with the most disruptive and least "self-directed" children. They thus began to think seriously of separating these children from the rest of the student population and of teaching them in self-contained classrooms where they could be controlled more effectively. As David Collier, the Unit Four directed room teacher, saw it, the problem was what to do with those children who seemed "not to have a perception of what it means to go to school and what they're to do here." And in a staff memo, John Patterson, the school's vice principal, expressed a concern that the school might have gone too far in reorganizing the instructional program on a completely self-guided, individualized basis. He wrote:

> Is there, in fact, too much activity and movement . . .? Are we expecting beyond what children can do in the form of degrees of freedom? Are we expecting beyond what most teachers can do in trying to monitor too many activities . . .? I sometimes yearn for closed classrooms and less student activity.

At the same time as the staff was seeking a workable solution to this classroom control problem, school administrators faced a problem in the community which affected the development of the directed room program. The year before the program began, a community group calling itself the Committee for Outstanding Public Education (COPE) was formed. According to the two school administrators, COPE's steering committee was composed of a small group of parents out to destroy the IIP program in the school. Members of COPE criticized the individualized curriculum for its stress upon "process" skills rather than basic reading, spelling, and computation skills; they disapproved of the emphasis upon individualized learning through workbooks and worksheets rather than through class discussion; they felt that the open learning environment allowed some children to waste time and cause trouble; and they generally supported a return to a more teacher-directed, "disciplined" form of classroom instruction.

The administrators liked to downplay the influence of COPE over school policy. They argued that educational decisions in the school were based on professional judgments and not pressure from a "small group of disaffected parents." But principal Peter Bowles added that it "was not coincidental" that the directed room program was formulated during the period when COPE was most active. The directed room program was obviously consistent with COPE's demand for more discipline, since it contained many of the worst "troublemakers." It also provided an alternative for those parents who were dissatisfied with IIP and wanted a more "traditional" program for their children, since these parents could elect to place their children in a directed room.

The directed room program, as initially formulated, was thus meant to deal with control problems in the efficient operation of the instructional program while, at the same time, it helped blunt criticism of the school from one segment of the community. But by the spring before the directed room program began, there were indications that COPE, which was less than a year old, was beginning to lose much of its staying power and, consequently, much of its influence over school policy. The staff began to think of the directed room program less as an alternative for parents who wanted a more traditional program for their children and more as a place to contain those children who were disrupting the instructional program. In the summer before the program started, no effort was

made to publicize it as an option for all children. Instead, letters were sent to a select group of parents informing them that their children had been recommended for placement in the directed room program and seeking their approval. John Patterson claimed that it made more sense to limit enrollment to those children who most "needed" the program. He was also concerned about having to "regear" the organization of the school if a large number of parents independently requested directed rooms for their children. He explained:

> Since our concern was that if we made an announcement to the community we might get half and half [half selecting the regular program and half opting for the directed room program], we didn't know what to do. That would be overwhelming. We couldn't regear for that. We thought what we'd better do is have two rooms and say, "We will start with these rooms. We have selected x number of kids and y number of kids for each room."

Because the program was not publicized in the community, and perhaps also because it was increasingly identified with disruptive children, few parents took the initiative independently to request the directed room program for their children. Approximately three-quarters of all children in the directed rooms were thus placed there through teacher recommendation. Significantly, these children were the only ones restricted to one teacher and one room for the entire school day, since parent-placed children left the directed rooms for ability-grouped skill classes in the open learning area. And because teacher-placed children were believed to "need" the program, they alone were informally identified as "directed" children.

We have seen how the staff responded to pragmatic problems, relating to the organization of the school's instructional program, by initiating the directed room program and thereby giving concrete meaning to an objectified view of children. In this process, a corpus of professional and commonsense knowledge about children and about their differences provided an important framework for making sense of teacher/student relations at McCann School and for developing acceptable or workable solutions to everyday problems within the particular school environment. We now need to shift our attention to the influence of these knowledge systems on the development of the directed room program.

The Staff's Professional Presuppositions About "Directed" Children

A central professional presupposition among the staff, and a basic tenet of IIP, was that children varied considerably in their learning characteristics and, therefore, could not be expected to relate either to the teacher or to the curriculum in quite the same way. Thus, John Patterson, the director of special services and vice principal, depicted the directed room program as recognition by the staff that one group of children in the school shared many of the same learning characteristics related to their common inability to work on their own and to follow self-guiding, individualized instructions without on-going teacher supervision. He commented:

> The supposition was that there was x number of kids (and none of us could agree on how many — 10 per cent, 30 per cent, 70 per cent of the total enrollment) who needed the good old-fashioned kind of room to learn in.

This supposition was reinforced at an IIP conference, held the year before the directed room program began, which was attended by Peter Bowles, principal at McCann School. A session at the conference dealt with differences in student

"directedness," and Peter immediately recognized the relevance of this notion to the problems the staff faced at McCann. After the conference, he discussed with the school's instructional board (which consisted of representatives from each instructional unit as well as the two administrators and supporting staff) the idea of varying instructional styles according to student "self-directedness". The instructional board was empowered to make all decisions regarding the instructional program. As Peter remembered:

> The term itself, "directed room," originated from a conference I attended in, I think, St. Louis, but I can't remember. Maybe it was Florida. Anyway, the people at one of the sessions I attended talked about "directedness" and "nondirectedness". . . . Well, coming back from a conference I always fill out a long thing about what I heard and some new ideas I got. And this terminology got put into that. And we talked in the instructional board about alternatives.

The directed room program was initiated shortly thereafter, and over the next two years the staff refined and expanded upon its professional notion of "directed" children, as they were occasionally called. In doing so, the staff members used a number of psychologisms. John Patterson, for example, occasionally described the children as EEN (exceptional educational needs) children; and a special report on the directed room program diagnosed the children's learning problems in terms of a "failure-oriented syndrome."

In order to identify "directed" children for placement in the program, the staff drew up a set of behavioral criteria. The presumption was that these were "objective" criteria and that their use would eliminate teacher bias from the selection process and insure that only children with specific learning characteristics would be assigned to the program. Specifically, "directed" children were defined in terms of the following characteristics: "immature," "lacks communication," "short attention span," "poor listening skills," "aggressive with others," "doesn't accept responsibility in large group," "lacks self confidence," "poor work habits," and "poor use of time." Of course, these supposedly "objective" criteria for classifying children had to be interpreted by individual teachers in assessing individual children, but this fact tended to be ignored in the professional logic of the staff.

A special report on the directed room program, prepared by the Unit Two directed room teacher, described "directed" children as having "similar emotional and psychological needs." The report also suggested that because these children were the victims of a "failure-oriented syndrome," they needed a more secure, teacher-directed environment where they could develop a "success orientation" and "positive self-concepts." Thus, the directed room program was presented, in professional terms, as a means of helping children experience "success" rather than "failure" at school. According to the report:

> Because of the nature of the IIP program, a child's self-discipline or lack of self-discipline becomes quickly apparent. Identification of young children who did not fit into the structure as well as others caused us to seek an alternative.
> The [placement] criteria identified children who not only lacked self-discipline but were failure-oriented children who had poor feelings of self-worth.
> Try to visualize a group of children unable to listen to and understand directions, work independently, accept responsibility for their own actions, and who were aggressive and lacked self-confidence so much that they failed to attempt work if someone wasn't there to help.
> One of William Glasser's[4] Pathways to Strength and Success involves gaining worth and recognition. A child who is having trouble succeeding in school begins to feel he

cannot gain this worth and recognition. This is painful to him. To avoid this pain the child will give up. . . The majority of the [directed room] students had reached this stage.

With regard to the etiology, or causation, of these children's perceived learning problems, the staff placed much of the blame on the home environment. Knowledge of children's home environments was considered to be important in the diagnosis of learning characteristics, and parent/teacher conferences were thus seen as suitable occasions for teachers to learn something about each child's home life. John Patterson described the importance of understanding the home environment of "directed" children.

The problems [of the children] are within, by and large. They may be related to the home also. They've got learning disabilities, emotional problems, behavior problems, and they were probably there when we saw them as kindergarteners.

The home environment was believed to produce "emotional instability," "psychological imbalance," "immaturity," and an "unstable personality." These terms expressed staff members' professional beliefs that psychological forces were at play, even if the forces could not be fully described. "Role model" was another important concept invoked in analysing parental influence. The staff frequently implied that well-behaved or well-adjusted children benefited from proper role models in the home, while "directed" children suffered from a lack of proper role models. For example, the Unit Four directed room teacher commented: "I like to think of myself sometimes as the role model that some of these kids don't have at home." And another teacher emphasized that, "It's so important that they have good role models before they even get to school."

This corpus of professional knowledge about learning "types" and the sociopsychological roots of student "problems" was most often invoked at staff meetings, formal interviews, parent meetings, and in school documents. It provided staff members with a coherent logic for explaining their relations with children as well as justifying general school policy. And as we shall now see, it was a logic which not only explained what was going on in the school, but also was consistent with the staff's own commonsense presuppositions about children and about social relations.

The Staff's Commonsense Presuppositions About "Directed" Children

Commonsense knowledge is that taken-for-granted knowledge which provides individuals with a frame within which to locate their situational activities and experiences and to relate them to a wider social sphere. Thus, commonsense knowledge is a logic system similar to that of scientific or professional knowledge but normally adhered to in a non-reflective manner and grounded in concrete, everyday experience. To understand the staff's commonsense presuppositions about "directed" children, I focused upon an analysis of informal teacher talk in Unit Four at the School. This teacher talk included conversation over lunch, between classes, and after school, as well as teacher/student dialogue in the unit's directed room.

In their informal conversation, the teachers generally accepted the notion that "directed" children represented a distinct subgroup within the student population, a subgroup with particular "problems" and "needs." And this meant that, in particular instances, the behavior of "directed" children was interpreted in terms of its typicality rather than its uniqueness. Thus, the

relevance of the category was confirmed by daily usage. The central characteristic of "directed" children, on this commonsensical level, was their presumed incorrigibility or delinquency. Teachers occasionally referred to the directed rooms as "dumping grounds" or "zoos" for "problem children." These interpretations of student behavior almost always included a moralistic component. That is, they expressed a conviction that "directed" children were "just" troublemakers who had to be taught to behave themselves — for example, "He's just lazy," "He's just trying to take advantage of me," and "She's obstinate today." The dominant theme of incorrigibility was perhaps best represented in a wall poster in the Unit Four directed room. While the other instructional areas in Unit Four had wall posters which communicated a relaxed and responsible attitude ("Don't push the river, it flows by itself" and "Sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits"), a large wall poster in the directed room was entitled "What is a Grumpy?" It read, in part:

Grumpies don't like working
Because they are too lazy.
But they scamper and fuss in the new school bus
And they drive the driver crazy.

In school the grumpies grumble.
They don't cooperate.
When others get to school on time —
The grumpies get there late.

The grumpies stomp and argue
About what they want to do.
Gee, I'm glad I'm not a grumpy
I'm sure that you are, too.

The Grumpy poster obviously helped define the "directed" children category for both teacher and students. The category was further defined and reinforced in ongoing classroom "metacommunication" (Bateson, 1972), designed to establish the parameters of acceptable interaction within the classroom. In the following bits of classroom conversation, the Unit Four directed room teacher characterizes his students as immature, ignorant, and lazy.

To a student, who is not working: When I ask you to do something I expect you to do it. Are you at a day care centre today, or a play school?

To the class, which has been watching a videotaped science program: I was very uncomfortable with what I observed while the TV was on. Once more it's evidence of your need to have a baby-sitter. There's no self-control, no self-motivation shown by most people in here. If I leave the room for a minute you think, "Oh, our supervisor is gone, our babysitter is gone, so we can talk." Do you need a watchdog . . .? It's disappointing, people. Maybe we should send a letter home to your mothers telling how much I charge to baby sit.

To two students who wander in front of the screen during a class movie: You two boys don't need drinks now. Isn't it obvious to you you're blocking the picture? Even cows in a barn would know better than that.

To the class, which has been coloring mimeographed copies of the state seal: Nineteen minutes you've been coloring. Now I can accept that you want to do a good job and maybe want to take your time. But I can't accept you being only

half done after nineteen minutes, because you've been walking around and talking and not settling down to work. . . . People, this is your work. You're not hurting me. You're only hurting yourself. . . . School is like a football game. If you come to school and fumble learning, then it's hard to recover. And you can feel sorry for yourself, but you have no one to blame but yourself.

The teachers occasionally related the differences between "directed" children and other children to the presumed differences between types of people in society. David Collier, who taught in the Unit Four directed room, did this most often. In conversation after class one day, he characterized himself as a "drill sergeant" of necessity, not desire. He concluded: "It's just like society. Some people have to be told what they can do and where to go, while others can be rational and can decide for themselves." At a Unit Four teachers' meeting, the following discussion occurred:

Teacher A: Some kids are just plain rote workers, you know. They're like the shovelers and that kind of thing.

Teacher B: Like factory workers.

Teacher A: And if you tell them to write those words five times, they'll do it. It basically boils down to memorization for those kinds of kids.

A more direct way of embedding the "directed" child category within a larger social context was through reference to the home environment. On the commonsense level, as at the professional level, "directed" children were presumed to come from "chaotic" and "neglectful" homes, without strong "authority figures." One teacher commented:

There are ones like Chuck, who has a great family mix-up, and he's totally taken down the drain by it. And Roger, who's so spacey and cute but yet kind of has the same problem as Chuck. And yet he's a little bit above him because he has a stepfather at home.

By relating student types to types of workers or families in the community, the staff made sense of student differences and gave the directed room program an added dimension of meaning. And consistent with a taken-for-granted association of student types with social types, the staff generally assumed that "directed" children, as a group, came from poor or working class backgrounds. Peter Bowles once commented:

I don't have any evidence for this, but I do think if you check their folders you'll find most of the kids in the directed rooms come from poorer families. I just have a sense that's true because I know most of the families. I could almost say I'm sure about it.

The relationship between class background and student placement is a well-documented educational "fact" (see, for example, Goldberg, Passow, and Justman, 1966). School records confirmed that, as a group, "directed" children at McCann came from backgrounds distinctively more working class than that of their cohorts in the open learning area. Figure 1 depicts the occupational backgrounds of the fathers of all Unit Four children in McCann School. Because of the small sample size (there were only 16 "directed" children in Unit Four during the time of the study), no claim is made that these figures are statistically significant; but they do indicate the reality of class differences in student placement. The differences between the two student groups are

perhaps most striking in the third occupational category. While only one "directed" child had a father who held a management or professional job, over 38 per cent of children in the rest of the unit had fathers in this category.

The teachers' commonsense presuppositions about "directed" children rather than being challenged by their more professional knowledge tended to be reinforced by it, and thus "directed" children, as a student type, came to be quite rigidly defined. On some levels, professional knowledge seemed to offer only a somewhat modified vocabulary for describing commonsense beliefs about learning "types" and their relation to family background. On other levels, commonsense knowledge injected a moralistic tone that was not present in professional terminology. But in all cases, the underlying objectivist logic of both knowledge systems remain the same: "directed" children represented a distinct learning "type," could be expected to behave in typically similar ways, and therefore required a uniform approach to instruction consistent with the learning characteristics attributed to them. Both knowledge systems thus provided a practical framework for structuring teacher/student relations and for managing the instructional program in an "efficient" manner that obliged children to stay "on task" in their work responsibilities.

Figure 1. The occupations of fathers of Unit Four children.

	Unskilled or semi-skilled manual labor	Skilled trade	Management or professional	Number excluded from sample (father's occupation unknown)
"Directed" Children	5(38.5%)	7(53.8%)	1(7.7%)	3
All Other Children	11(16.9%)	29(44.6%)	25(38.5%)	31

The Demise of The Directed Room Program

The directed room program was never more than a workable solution for structuring teacher/student relations; this meant that it created certain organizational problems at the same time as it helped the staff deal with others. In its second year of operation, there was thus growing sentiment among the staff that the directed room program should be discontinued and that other means be found of dealing with student control problems. David Collier had decided that "I just wouldn't teach in a directed room again next year." A proposal to discontinue the program was formally introduced before the instructional board and the district school board.

There were several related reasons for the general dissatisfaction with the directed room program. The most oft-cited of these was the behavior problems in directed rooms seemed to be worsening rather than improving the longer children stayed in the program. In professional terms, the staff argued that there were inadequate "role models" in the directed rooms for children to emulate. Peter Bowles claimed that "The modelling concept works against us in there [the directed rooms]." David Collier articulated a similar viewpoint:

Certain behaviors we wanted to change have not changed, but they've reinforced one another. Some children, instead of maturing, have remained immature.

Some staff members argued that the sociopsychological problems of "directed" children were more deep-rooted than any of them had originally expected. John Patterson, for example, felt that many "directed" children should really be classified as "special education" children, a legal and administrative category for children with diagnosed learning disabilities. John therefore feared that the school district might be in violation of a state law requiring the licensing of special education programs and teachers. He also felt that special classes for disruptive children were perhaps not the best way of dealing with their problems, and he pointed to recent studies which suggested that children with special learning problems and needs should be "mainstreamed."

These professional concerns about the effects of the directed room program on children's behavior and attitudes were parallelled on the pragmatic level by several other concerns, as they had been when the program was initiated. The first of these was that directed room teachers were dissatisfied with their role in the school. They complained of being under considerable emotional stress as a result of their teaching experiences and felt unfairly put upon. This seemed to be David Collier's primary reason for not wanting to continue as a directed room teacher for another year. He often complained of feeling "drained" after a particularly rough day and felt that against his will, he was becoming more and more like a "drill sergeant." It was the general consensus of the staff that while David had it bad, Ruth Bennet, the Unit Two directed room teacher, had it even worse. Not only did she have the larger class of directed children, she seemed less able to cope with many of the problems she encountered each day in the classroom. A United Four teacher once commented:

> Ruth has twenty-nine of those kids in that classroom. Can you imagine that? She's going nuts. She really is. She hates to get up in the morning.

Thus, although the directed room program had been designed to relieve some of the pressure on most teachers, it had placed that pressure on two teachers who increasingly resented having to bear it.

Another pragmatic reason for dissatisfaction with the directed room program was that it necessitated an increase in the size of other classes in the school. In organizing the program, the instructional board had decided to keep the teacher/student ratio in directed rooms somewhat lower than in other classes. The hope was that this would ease some of the burdens on directed room teachers and allow them to supervise children more closely. Now, two years later, the other teachers were increasingly concerned about class size because of the rapidly rising enrollment in the school, and they resented having to increase the size of their own classes so that directed room classes could be kept small.

While most staff members believed that the directed room program should be discontinued because of the problems it created, no one questioned the underlying professional and commonsense presumption that there were particular student "types" with identifiable learning "needs." The question was not whether certain children needed special attention but how they should be handled. Thus, when the instructional board voted to discontinue the directed room program, it sought alternatives for dealing with "directed" children within the regular class structure. John Patterson believed that the task was to identify "directed techniques" for these children, and in a special memo to the school board, the instructional board listed eight such "directed techniques":

(1) re-evaluating each child in the receiving unit to determine which children need special attention; (2) keeping close surveillance over "directed" children in all classes; (3) requiring that some "directed" children remain with their homeroom teachers throughout the school day; (4) "mini-teaming" other children so that they would have no more than two teachers during the day; (5) assigning "directed" children to homerooms with more "structured" teachers; (6) using discussion groups to help teach these children self-direction; (7) providing special teaching approaches for "directed" children, such as small group instruction with much teacher direction; and (8) notifying parents regarding special plans for their children in the school program, so that they might also be involved.

As the school year came to an end, it seemed likely that some combination of these approaches would be employed in each unit in the coming year in an attempt to manage more effectively the institutional experiences of a number of children who posed a serious threat to the school's instructional processes and objectives. Although the directed room program had been abandoned, the objectivist presumptions and the organizational conditions which brought it into existence continued to exert a strong influence over school policy and classroom practice.

Conclusion

In the case study of the McCann School directed room program, an attempt was made to portray objectification as an everyday institutional phenomenon, grounded at the level of consciousness in certain taken-for-granted beliefs about individuals and their social relations, and embedded within a particular institutional setting. These two elements — an objectified world view and objective institutional conditions — reflect and inform one another in the routine construction of student "types" in schools. The commonsense logic that teachers and administrators draw upon in assessing children and informally sorting them according to "types" is the same logic which enters into professional and scientific depictions of children's learning "characteristics," "problems," and "needs." It is a logic well-suited to the objective conditions of schooling. That is, it lends itself to the highly bureaucratized and routinized organization of schooling in which the efficient management and control of large groups of children who lack minimal motivation to instructional processes and objectives is an ongoing, pragmatic concern of the staff.

At McCann School, this pragmatic concern for managing the instructional program in an "efficient" manner, so that children stayed "on task," motivated the staff to search for a "workable" solution to student control and motivation problems. The directed room program was one such workable solution, at least for a time. Not only did the program seem "reasonable" to the staff at the level of commonsense logic but also it could be presented in professional terms, seemed consistent with the routine grouping of children according to "skill level," and was perceived as one way of blunting criticism of school discipline practices by a vocal segment of the community. "Directed" children were an everyday, organizational accomplishment or product of these interlinked elements, relevant to both the objective context of teacher/student relations and the structures of meaning employed within that context.

This perspective on schooling, which emphasizes the dialectic interplay between meaning and structure in everyday educational practice, generates a number of important implications. First, it implies that an important area of inquiry should be the school's role in social reproduction whereby a dominant

system of objectified social relations is constituted and given everyday meaning by institutional actors. As Michael Apple has observed, "The reproduction and legitimation of a social order go on in other than economic ways" (1978, p. 497), and it is important that we analyse the particular role of the school in this general process of assembling dominant social structures and meanings. The limitations of both functionalism and structuralism (including Marxist varieties) in this regard have been their tendency to treat social structure and order as mechanical outcomes instead of constitutive processes accomplished and reproduced by active subjects. As individuals routinely draw upon certain structures of meaning as modalities of interaction, they also reproduce them as social structure (Giddens, 1976, p. 123). Thus, at McCann School, the directed room program structured the staff's relations with a particular group of children; and the conformity of "directed" children to specified learning "characteristics" concealed the true character of social relations in the school by shifting relations to the level of "objective" student "problems" which needed special attention. A critical sociology of education must begin de-reifying such school relations and structures.

It is also important to recognize that the objectification characteristic of school relations is a particular form of a general social phenomenon. As Lukács has noted, the symbolic development of a society is a unified process, exerting an impact over all areas of institutional life. "Through this unity and coherence of social development it is possible to grasp and achieve an understanding of the same process from the standpoint of one social phenomenon or another" (Lukács, 1973, p. 4). This means viewing school processes and structures in relation to the societal and professional infrastructure in which they are embedded. It also means recognizing the connections between manifestations of objectification within the school, including objectification in the curricular (productive), organizational (management), and professional (ideological) subsystems. An adequate theory of change and stability in schooling must account for all of these levels of reality and meaning.

A final implication of this perspective is that we analyse professional knowledge and logic systems not as purely "scientific" and "rational" approaches to understanding children and their learning experiences and as systems linked to ideological superstructures of meaning. In the twentieth century, professional and scientific educational knowledge has generated definite forms of instructional technology and organization, which reflect important political and social developments. As such, it has never been "neutral" or "disinterested"; and as I have argued elsewhere in this paper, it is precisely this tendency to interpret scientific or professional knowledge as more "authoritative" *vis-a-vis* competing approaches that has masked its important role in legitimation. In education, legitimation can be related to the ongoing effort, since progressivism, to depoliticize the treatment of children through the application of evidence from educational psychology, and to depoliticize the organization and control of education through the application of evidence from the administrative sciences. This makes the relation between professional and scientific metalanguages and everyday educational practice a topic of basic importance in the sociology of education.

Notes:

1. If any study along these lines deserves special mention for its methodological and theoretical sophistication, it is probably that by Rachel Sharp and Anthony Green (1975). Their ethnographic account of a "progressive" infant school in England demonstrated that even in the most innovative schools, objectified and class-based stratification systems developed, and that these were consistent with the teachers' taken-for-granted beliefs about children's "maturity" levels as well as the real constraints imposed by the organization of the school.

2. The university-based R&D Centre had "tested-out" and evaluated a number of individualized instructional materials at McCann School, and had helped set up the school' computer managed instructional program. The R&D Centre also provided occasional in-service training and workshops for teachers at the school.

3. Two-thirds of the third grade "directed" children in the Unit Four directed room during its first year were reassigned to the room as fourth graders. And although teacher recollections varied somewhat, it appeared that between three-fifths to all of the "directed" children who were transferred out of the Unit Two directed room at the end of its first year were assigned to the Unit Four directed room for the following year.

4. William Glasser was frequently referred to at McCann School. The staff believed that his emphasis upon student success (see particularly, *Schools Without Failure*, 1964) was consistent with the IIP system of instruction, which allowed each child to succeed by progressing at his or her own pace and in his or her particular learning "style."

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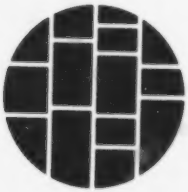
Annotated bibliography



Adamson, W. L., 'Beyond "reform or revolution": notes on political education in Gramsci, Habermas and Arendt', *Theory and Society*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1978, pp. 429–60.
This article interprets Gramsci's theory of political education as it relates to the psychological, the institutional, and the societal levels. Important philosophical connections with the theories of critical consciousness developed by Habermas and Arendt are also explored.

Apple, M. W., *Ideology and Curriculum*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1979.
This is an important book, containing a detailed analysis of the ideological hegemony of school experience. Apple exposes a number of ideological commitments that normally lie embedded in both the hidden and the overt curriculum. Of particular concern to administrators are the chapters on 'systems management and the ideology of control' and 'commonsense categories and the politics of labeling'. The discussion draws on the work of Gramsci, Williams, and Bourdieu to show how technical assumptions embedded in professional practices 'help recreate the ideological and structural hegemony of the powerful'.

Apple, M. W., *Education and Power*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982.
The central claim of this book is that schools are both places of work and sites of struggle for students and teachers alike. Because of the current structural crisis in society, Apple argues, the primary elements used to organise and control the labour process — such as the separation of mental from manual labour, the divorce of conception from execution, the logic of deskilling and controlling a work-force — all are being reconstituted in complex and paradoxical ways in schools at the present time. Apple mounts a strong critique against mechanistic theories of social reproduction and argues that schools are relatively autonomous institutions in which contradictory connections among the cultural, political, and economic spheres provide the conditions for resistance and contestation. While the production and circulation of technical administrative knowledge is a dominant form of ideological hegemony, there is sufficient good sense embedded within the curricular actions of many teachers to provide the conditions in which a counter-hegemonic cultural transformation might be possible.

Bernstein, R. J., *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1976.
This is an advanced philosophical exposition of various epistemological frameworks for social science. It discusses a number of important social theorists representing different empirical, linguistic, and phenomenological positions and concludes with a lucid and useful commentary on the idea of a critical theory of society contained in the writings of Horkheimer and Habermas.

Boggs, C., *Gramsci's Marxism*, Pluto Press, London, 1976.
A good introduction to Gramsci as the first Marxist theorist to recognise the nature of ideological-cultural domination. The chapter on hegemony and class struggle is particularly useful in locating Gramsci's philosophy within the context of his unique political experiences.

Broadfoot, P., *Assessment, Schools and Society*, Methuen, London, 1979.
Contains a critical investigation of school assessment practices, showing how these provide an ideological instrument of social control, functioning to reproduce the inequalities in society. An impressive body of research is reviewed to support the argument that assessment practices obscure a fundamental contradiction between liberal reformist educational ideals and the reality of socially-differentiating cultural reproduction.

Carr, W., 'Philosophical styles and education theory', *Educational Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1979, pp. 23–33.
An examination of the limitations of those analytical approaches to educational philosophy that take it to be an activity of conceptual criticism and clarification. Carr suggests that such approaches are unresponsive to the problems of educational practice and he argues for a more reflexive relationship between theory and practice in which the task of philosophy is to expose and evaluate the structural features of the theoretical frameworks within which educational practices are conceived.

Carr, W., 'The gap between theory and practice', *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1980, pp. 60–9.
In this article, Carr suggests that there is a communication gap between educational theorists and practitioners because each subscribes to a different notion of theory. He argues that the theory that guides practice is that which enables practitioners to develop a more refined and effective understanding of their own problems and practices. This is to be distinguished from the kind of theory that guides and structures theoretical forms of inquiry and research in domains such as psychology or sociology. The argument is consistent with Gramsci's view of philosophy as the critique of common sense.

Codd, J. A., 'Toward a critical appreciation of school culture and curriculum', *Curriculum Perspectives*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1982, pp. 15–21.
This article begins with a rejection of technological/positivist ways of thinking about school curricula and goes on to advocate a critical aesthetic perspective taking Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour* as an illustration. It is suggested that such a perspective might foster an attitude of open-mindedness towards knowledge and a capacity for critical self-reflection in the administration of school culture and curriculum.

de Castell, S., and Freeman, H., 'Education as a socio-practical field: the restructuring of educational theory', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1978, pp. 1–25.
This paper presents a challenge to the traditional conception of educational theory in which philosophy is construed as a form of descriptive analytical inquiry, characterised by the clarification, elucidation, and justification of theoretical knowledge. In contrast to this theoretico-practical view of philosophy, the authors argue for what they call a socio-practical view, which embodies the practical purpose of formulating and engaging in action 'intended to affect directly the lives of other human beings and solve the problems of day-to-day living'. The task of philosophy, within this context of socio-practical theorising, is to justify social practices within the constraints of actual contexts by making them consistent, as far as possible, with valid theoretical understanding. It is a complex, but very important, argument.

Farganis, J., 'A preface to critical theory', *Theory and Society*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1975, pp. 483–508.
This article provides a useful commentary on critical theory by focusing on selected aspects of the works of Marcuse and Habermas. In particular, it explores the notion that all social science is infused with politically relevant values. Critical theory is discussed as an alternative paradigm to positivism and its purpose is demonstrated by reference to the arguments of Habermas concerning the role of science and technology as ideology.

Fay, B., *Social Theory and Political Practice*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1975.
This book is invaluable for a full understanding of the contemporary theory debate in the field of educational administration. It contains an excellent overview of the epistemology of social science and provides a concise and scholarly account of the political assumptions implicit in both the positivist and interpretative paradigms. The final chapter presents a speculative view of the main features of a critical model of social science.

Femia, J. V., *Gramsci's Political Thought*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981.
A scholarly exposition of Gramsci's central ideas, containing important chapters on the concept of hegemony and the role of consciousness in political life. Femia cogently argues that Gramsci's main contribution to Marxist analysis was to help shift its focus away from economics and natural science and towards the domain of culture — 'to philosophy and the intellectuals, to popular psychology, and to the manifold agencies of socialisation'.

Freeman, H., and Jones, A., 'Educational research and two traditions of epistemology', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1980, pp. 1–20.
Written from a philosophical viewpoint, this paper considers the central problems of objectivity and relativism in relation to educational research. It argues that both positivist and phenomenological forms of educational research can be used to legitimise subtle structures of social control. Finally, it advances a notion of objectivity as 'self-critical public reflection', which arises from a constructivist epistemology and can provide the basis for educational research that is socially and morally 'responsible'.

Freire, P., *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1972.
This is Freire's most influential work. Although his language is difficult and his ideas complex, he writes with a great power, which excites the imagination. He discusses his central notions of 'concientization' and cultural action, showing how these provide the basis for an emancipatory educational praxis.

Freire, P., *Education: The Practice of Freedom*, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, London, 1976.
This book contains a detailed account of how critical consciousness at the societal level is formed through specific pedagogical practice and cultural action. It offers a very significant and convincing account of the educative role of critical theory, with reference to the oppressed peasants of an underdeveloped country.

Geuss, R., *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.
This brief and brilliantly lucid book attempts to explain what is meant by a 'critical' theory of society within the context of Frankfurt School thought. It offers a systematic analysis of the cognitive structure of critical theory and elucidates the meaning of some important related concepts such as 'ideology', 'ideological critique', and 'real interests'. The discussion focuses on the views of Habermas in attempting to come to a clear understanding of how it might be possible for a critical theory to be a reflective form of knowledge, producing both enlightenment and emancipation.

Giddens, A., *New Rules of Sociological Method*, Hutchinson, London, 1976.
An exposition of the philosophical assumptions underlying various schools of social science, including phenomenology, ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, and critical theory. The main themes concern the significance of action and language in the reflexive ordering of rationalised conduct by human agents.

Giddens, A., *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*, Macmillan, London, 1978.
This book provides an extremely useful guide to some of the most complex problems in contemporary social theory. The discussion, in Chapter 2, of the connection between human agency and social structure is one of the best available and another important chapter examines the relationship between ideology and consciousness.

Giroux, H. A., *Ideology, Culture & the Process of Schooling*, Falmer Press, London, 1981.
This important collection of essays provides an excellent overview of contemporary ideological and cultural critiques of schooling. The introduction provides a very useful analysis of educational theory in terms of technocratic, interpretive, and reproductive forms of rationality and an important paper on Freire's radical pedagogy also deserves careful study.

Giroux, H. A., 'Power and resistance in the new sociology of education: beyond theories of social and cultural reproduction', *Curriculum Perspectives*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1982, pp. 1–13.
This paper develops the thesis that schools are much more than merely agencies of social and cultural reproduction. As relatively autonomous sites of mediation, resistance, and social struggle, 'schools not only repress subjectivities but are also actively involved in their production'. This basic contradiction has been neglected too often in educational theorising.

Gruber, H. E., and Voneche, J. J. (eds), *The Essential Piaget*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1978.
Piaget's work extends over a vast area of cognitive functioning (or genetic epistemology) and is concerned with the development of mathematical and scientific concepts, moral judgements, logical reasoning, play, imagination, and fantasy. This book contains a representative selection from his voluminous writings.

Habermas, J., *Knowledge and Human Interests*, tr. by J. J. Shapiro, Beacon Press, Boston, 1971.
This is a very difficult book, but it is also very important as it is the most

complete philosophical account of the Habermasian epistemology. The book is an elaboration of the central thesis of 'knowledge-constitutive interests', which is fundamental to an understanding of how critical theory goes beyond technical/instrumental and practical/hermeneutic forms of rationality.

Habermas, J., *Theory and Practice*, tr. J. Viertel, Beacon Press, Boston, 1973.
Again, the complexity of the prose and the highly condensed nature of the philosophical reasoning places this book beyond the grasp of many readers. However, the introduction contains an important synthesis of the basic arguments through which Habermas has attempted to establish the dialectical relationship between action and discourse.

Harris, K., *Education and Knowledge*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1979.
In a reflexive manner, this book turns the critical tools of philosophical analysis back upon liberal-idealist philosophy of education and argues that this corpus of educational thought is fundamentally ideological in character, serving only to legitimate existing school knowledge, which, according to Harris, is 'the structured misrepresentation of reality'.

Hodgkinson, C., *Towards a Philosophy of Administration*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1978.
In this book, Hodgkinson advances the thesis that administration should be construed as 'philosophy-in-action'. The analysis raises very important ethical issues and is mainly concerned with the process of valuing in practical rationality, but it falls somewhat short of developing a socially critical view of administration. Epistemological issues are largely ignored, although the book raises a number of important philosophical questions.

Mackie, R. (ed.), *Literacy and Revolution: The Pedagogy of Paulo Freire*, Pluto Press, London, 1980.
The eight essays in this collection explore the philosophical, practical, and political dimensions of Freire's educational theory. In particular, contributions by Matthews, Mackie, and Walker provide illuminating and critical interpretations of Freire's pedagogical and political project.

Mouffe, C., 'Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci', in C. Mouffe (ed.), *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1979.
This essay provides an illuminating account of the pivotal concepts in Gramsci's political theory. The relationship between ideology and hegemony is discussed in terms of Gramsci's non-reductionist conception of power and his critique of economism. It is within this problematic that Gramsci forges the link between subjectivity and politics, recognising that every aspect of human experience, including common sense, can mediate the effects of domination.

Piaget, J., *Structuralism*, tr. by C. Maschler, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1971.
In this book, Piaget locates his own work in developmental psychology within the much broader tradition of structuralism, which extends across several disciplines, including mathematics, physics, biology, linguistics, and anthropology. In criticising the work of other structuralists, such as Levi-Strauss, Chomsky, and Foucault, he argues for a 'constructivist' ac-

count in which consciousness is structured by the self-regulating and self-governing actions of the individual agent.

Piaget, J., *Insights and Illusions of Philosophy*, tr. W. Mays, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1972.
This book presupposes a familiarity with recent trends in European philosophy, particularly those associated with the schools of phenomenology and existentialism. While strongly criticising such philosophical views, Piaget argues that philosophy can provide us with insights and with wisdom, but that it must be combined with an empirical engagement with the real world if it is to give us knowledge rather than merely idealist illusion. He exemplifies this argument with reference to his own project in the field of 'philosophical psychology'.

Piaget, J., *The Principles of Genetic Epistemology*, tr. W. Mays, Basic Books, New York, 1972.
This is the clearest and most explicit account by Piaget of his constructivist epistemology, illustrated by examples of the construction of basic logical, mathematical, and physical concepts.

Plamenatz, J., *Ideology*, Macmillan, London, 1970.
Provides a clarification of the 'family' of concepts that bear the name 'ideology' and explains the important uses of the term as these have emerged in the history of social and political theory. The book devotes considerable attention to what Marx said about ideology and provides a lucid account of how the concept has been elaborated by a range of thinkers including Mannheim and Lukács.

Wexler, P., 'Structure, text, and subject: a critical sociology of school knowledge', in M. W. Apple (ed.), *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982.
In this brilliant article, Wexler outlines a critical theory of educational knowledge. Such a theory, he argues, should go beyond structural accounts, with their emphasis on what school knowledge represents, towards a view of knowledge as a process of transformative social activity. In this view, it is possible to conceive of a dialectical relationship between the subject and the curriculum text that has the potential to become 'an invitation to transformative activity rather than an imposed socialisation'.

Williams, R., *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977.
This is one of the best accounts available of how social relations are mediated through consciousness. Williams provides a lucid analysis of how ideological hegemony is embodied in such everyday cultural practices as 'thinking' and 'imagining', as well as in the literary and aesthetic formations that become part of a 'selective tradition'.

White, R. D., 'Education in bourgeois society: a matter of common sense', *Interchange*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1980–81, pp. 47–60.
Contains a useful summary, illustrated with reference to the Canadian school system, of how educational practices can be viewed in Gramscian terms as hegemonic forms of cultural domination.

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